

Guidance on quality standards under Regulation EC 1107/2006

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Introduction

1. The aim of Regulation EC1107/2006¹ concerning the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air (“the Regulation”) is to ensure that such people have the same opportunities for air travel as those of others, in particular that they have the same rights to free movement, freedom of choice and non-discrimination.
2. In relation to airports, the requirements of the Regulation deal mostly with the assistance that airports are required to provide to disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility to help them move around the airport and embark or disembark the aircraft (usually through a contracted service provider). Given this, it is imperative that airports set appropriate quality standards for this assistance to ensure that it is delivered to an acceptable standard.
3. It is also important that these service quality standards, and the performance against them, are made public so that disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility can have the confidence to travel, knowing that their assistance needs will be met; and also, so that they can hold the airport to account if the assistance provided by the airport did not meet expected levels. Making this information public may also allow these passengers to incorporate airport performance into their decisions over which airports to fly to and from.
4. The purpose of this guidance is to help clarify the requirements of the Regulation in relation to the setting, monitoring, and publication of service quality standards, to ensure that the objectives of the Regulation are met, and to help give passengers the confidence to travel, knowing that their assistance needs will be met.
5. This document refers to Regulation EC1107/2006 throughout. In preparation for the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union, the Government is in the process of ensuring the full body of European law is incorporated into the UK’s legal system. There will therefore be no change to the obligations of airports and the CAA with respect to disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility after the UK leaves the EU.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32006R1107>

Chapter 1

Publication of quality standards

6. Article 9(3) requires airports to publish their quality standard documents. These should be separate to any service level agreement with the service provider.
7. It is important to ensure that a passenger can identify quality standards quickly and easily on an airport's website. Quality standards documents should be published on the 'accessibility' sections of airport websites.

Chapter 2

What the quality standards should contain

Legal framework

8. The importance of setting, monitoring, and publishing service quality standards is recognised in Article 9 of the Regulation. Article 9(1) requires that airports with 150,000 commercial passengers or more "set quality standards" for the assistance specified in Annex I of the Regulation and that these quality standards are published (Article 9(3)). Under Article 14 there is a specific obligation on the CAA, as the UK National Enforcement Body, to "where appropriate...take the measures necessary to ensure that the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility are respected, including compliance with the quality standards".
9. The Regulation states that airports must set the quality standards for the items listed in Annex I of the Regulation and that "full account" must be "taken of internationally recognised policies and codes of conduct...notably the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) Code of Good Conduct in Ground Handling for Persons with Reduced Mobility (Annex 5-C to ECAC Doc 30 Part 1 Section 5)²". The airports must set quality standards, and determine resources for meeting them, in cooperation with airport users and "organisations representing disabled passengers and passengers with reduced mobility".
10. The Regulation also allows for airports to agree higher standards, or provide additional services, for passengers travelling with particular carriers. However, an airline may be required to pay an additional fee per passenger to the airport for this enhanced service.

The ECAC Code and service standards

11. The ECAC Code at paragraph 7 (service standards and performance monitoring) provides a number of timeframes and percentage standards for assistance (these metrics are covered in more detail in subsequent sections of this guidance). Paragraph 9.1 of the ECAC Code specifies also that there should be "regular reviews to monitor the service provider's performance against the quality standards and to continually improve performance-monitoring systems."

² <https://www.ecac-ceac.org/documents/10189/51566/Doc+30+Part+I+12th-Dec+2018%5B1%5D.pdf/2f8b7268-82d5-4d7b-aab4-1b4c097056ae>

12. The Code also states that the metrics referred to in paragraph 7.5 "represent the minimum levels of service". They do not cover all the areas of assistance that airports are required to provide under Annex 1 of the Regulation. The Code proposes that the metrics in paragraph 7.5 should be supplemented by a number of broader performance measures, including that
- all customers should be satisfied with the assistance provided;
 - subject to pre-notification, 100% of departing customers who are at the designated point within the stipulated time should reach their aircraft in time to enable timely pre-boarding and departure;
 - all employees, including the management, who deal directly with the travelling public at airports, should receive training that meets the minimum standards as defined in ECAC Doc 30, Part 1, Section 5 and "training should respect the principles set out in Annex 5-G and training courses should be developed in partnership with recognised national and European forums of people with disabilities".
13. It is the CAA's view that airports should implement every recommendation in the ECAC Code. The recommendations will deliver a performance framework that is compliant with Article 9 of the Regulation. It also, more meaningfully, should ensure that airports are able to give disabled persons and those with reduced mobility the confidence to travel knowing that their assistance needs will be met; to allow disabled persons and those with reduced mobility the ability to incorporate information on the performance against the standards into their consumer decision-making; and to enable people to better hold the airport to account if the assistance provided by the airport does not meet their expectations.

Departing passengers

14. Each quality standards document should include a requirement, as set out in the ECAC Code (paragraph 7.5), that "subject to pre-notification, 100% of departing customers who are at the designated point within the stipulated departure time should reach their aircraft in time to enable timely pre-boarding and departure". This will ensure that all passengers who have pre-notified at least 48 hours before travel and arrive either at check-in, or at a designated point, at the times requested by the airline (or if no time is provided arrive no later than one hour at check-in, or two hours at a designated point, before the flight time (Article 7 of the Regulation)) will be provided with assistance that will get them to the gate on time and be pre-boarded.
15. For passengers who have not pre-notified 48 hours before travel, the airport (or service provider) must make "all reasonable efforts" to get disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility to the gate on time (Article 7(3)). The CAA's view is that airports should not attempt to quantify this in terms of a percentage. However, airports

should note that the European Commission, in its 'Interpretative guidelines'³ for the Regulation, expects airports "to take a proactive role in seeking to meet any request for assistance".

16. Airports should record and investigate each incident of a user of the assistance service (both pre-notified and non-notified) missing their flight. The investigation should determine the cause, or causes, of the service failure. A summary of the findings of the investigation for each incident should be submitted to the CAA.
17. The ECAC Code (paragraph 7.5) stipulates targets for waiting times at landside "designated points", including those outside the terminal building once passengers have made themselves known and before assistance is provided. These should be adopted as minimum standards and it should be made clear that this includes all "designated" points within the terminal boundary or under the direct control of the airport. This includes landside reception areas (where it is assumed waiting times would be minimal) and check-in desks. However, it also includes designated points in, for example, car parks and train stations. For these designated points, the time at which people have let themselves be known is generally when they call on the help point. The time for assistance is once the passengers has been in met in person by a staff member.

Transit passengers

18. To meet the obligation listed under Annex 1 of the Regulation to "reach connecting flights when in transit", each document should state that, subject to "minimum connection times", all passengers who have pre-notified at least 48 hours prior to travel should reach their connecting aircraft to enable timely pre-boarding and departure. For those that have not pre-notified, airports must "make all reasonable efforts" to ensure that the passenger reaches the gate on time (again, the CAA's view is that this should not be quantified).
19. Airports should record and investigate each incident of a user of the assistance service (both pre-notified and non-notified) missing their connecting flight due to them not being assisted to the flight in time. The investigation should determine the cause, or causes, of the service failure. A summary of the findings of the investigation for each incident should be submitted to the CAA.

³ http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/passengers/air/doc/prm/2012-06-11-swd-2012-171_en.pdf

Arriving passengers

20. The ECAC Code only recommends targets for arriving passengers in relation to assistance being available at the gate or aircraft side. Waiting times for passengers arriving on flights served by air bridges should be measured from the time that the assistance for each passenger is available at the gate, and flights not served by air bridges should be measured from the time that the assistance is available for each passenger at the aircraft side. These should be adopted as minimum standards.
21. Airports should record and investigate each incident where the assistance for each passenger (both pre-notified and non-notified) is not available within 45 minutes of 'on chocks'. The investigation should determine the cause, or causes, of the service failure. A summary of the findings of the investigation for each incident should be submitted to the CAA.
22. The ECAC Code does not make specific recommendations for targets for the total time taken to assist arriving passengers to the end point of their assistance journey. Given the significant differences between airports in terms of their geographical size, terminal design and other infrastructure, it would not be possible to set a single target applicable to all airports. However, consistent with the objective of the Regulation to ensure that disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility have the same opportunities for air travel as others, in particular that they have the same rights to free movement, freedom of choice and non-discrimination, the CAA considers that arriving passengers that use the assistance service should not be unduly delayed in their arrival journey through the airport as compared to other passengers.
23. The CAA would therefore like to encourage individual airports to develop targets for the total time taken to assist arriving passengers to the end point of their assistance journey in comparison to the time taken by other passengers. However, the CAA recognises the technical challenges faced by airports in measuring and recording the journey times for users of the assistance service compared to other passengers.
24. In the absence of individual airport targets for the arrivals assistance journey, the CAA considers that it is necessary to place further requirements on airports in relation to the arrivals assistance journey to ensure that users of the assistance service are not unduly delayed in their arrival journey through the airport as compared to other passengers. Specifically, the CAA's view is that, once the passenger is disembarked and de-boarding is complete, the airport must assist the passenger through the airport in one continuous 'movement' – i.e. directly from the arrival gate, through immigration and baggage reclaim, and to the final point specified by the passenger, without a break in the assistance. The only exception to this requirement is in situations where a short 'handover' is necessary to enable the passenger to be transferred between staff and equipment.

25. The ECAC Code (paragraph 5.2) recommends that “handover points should be avoided where possible. Where they cannot be avoided, procedures must be in place to ensure that there is a continuity of service and that the passenger is not forgotten or left for too long”. Consistent with this, the CAA’s view is that there should be a maximum of one such handover before the baggage reclaim area or alternatively the arrivals hall. In addition, there should be a maximum of one handover after the baggage reclaim area or arrivals hall.
26. Those airports that use handover points must agree a performance metric with the CAA to help ensure a seamless service. Airports may agree with the CAA a temporary exemption from the requirements on handover points because of existing infrastructure issues and terminal refurbishment.

Passenger surveys

27. The Code recommends that airports conduct regular passenger surveys of disabled persons and persons who are less mobile. The CAA’s view is that such tools are necessary to give airports a more complete assessment of the quality of the assistance provided to these passengers, particularly in areas such as staff attitudes, behaviours and customer service skills.
28. The CAA’s preference is that each airport should conduct its own regular surveys of passenger satisfaction. However, to address the burden of running such surveys on smaller airports, the CAA hosts a satisfaction survey which is available for those UK airports to use who do not have their own surveys. It covers key areas set out under Annex 1 of the Regulation. It can also be ‘branded’ as being from the airport, rather than the CAA. To ensure qualitative metrics are used consistently and universally, airports’ own surveys must include the key areas of the passenger journey covered in the CAA survey and be approved by the CAA before being used.
29. We expect UK airports to actively advertise and promote their satisfaction survey to passengers that use the assistance service at the airport. To help ensure representative sample sizes, airports should collect the email addresses of users of the service that are willing to participate in the survey, and then email these individuals post-travel to encourage them to complete the survey. We recommend airports ask all passengers who make themselves known to staff as needing assistance of any type.
30. Airports should ensure that they are able to capture feedback on the assistance provided to people with both physical and ‘hidden’ disabilities.

Chapter 3

Consultation

31. Article 9(1) of the Regulation requires that airports set quality standards, and determine resources for meeting them, in cooperation with airlines through the Airport Users Committee, if one exists. It is the CAA's view that if one does not exist, the airport must ensure it arranges for an alternative form of consultation which includes all airlines operating from the airport.
32. Airports must also set quality standards, and determine resources for meeting them, in cooperation with "organisations representing disabled passengers and passengers with reduced mobility." The Department for Transport Code of Practice for Access to Air Travel for Disabled Persons and Persons with Reduced Mobility⁴ suggests that airports could involve "local access/disability groups whose membership would include users of airports" and provides a list of questions which airports can use to assess the suitability of groups (paragraph 5.3 of the Code of Practice). Organisations or individuals representing a wide array of disabilities and mobility issues should be consulted. Consulting with individual passengers who travel from the airport regularly is also an option (perhaps those who have made complaints or compliments to the airport about the assistance service). Consultation should be done by convening regular forums containing representatives of disability groups and disabled individuals, in particular those that travel through the airport and use the assistance service. Annex 8 of the Department for Transport Code of Practice sets out guidelines which may be helpful in deciding membership of the forums. The CAA strongly recommends that such forums are chaired by representatives of disability organisations or disabled individuals and members are either disabled or care for family members who are disabled. It is important that airports set out clear expectations of members and explain how their advice will be used by the airport.
33. As a minimum, accessibility forums should meet twice a year and be involved in discussions about
- setting quality standards
 - reviews of performance against the quality standards
 - reviews of performance-monitoring systems

⁴<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/aviationshipping/accesstoairtravelfordisabled.pdf>

- awarding contracts to service providers (although not necessarily issues that are commercially confidential)
- providing advice on the accessibility of planned new terminals or refurbishment of old terminal buildings
- providing advice on the accessibility of facilities, equipment and services
- training programmes
- designating points of arrival and departure
- practical inspections of airport services (generally using 'walk-throughs').

34. Quality standards documents should make clear that consultation has taken place and list who was consulted; when they were consulted; and how their views were considered (for airlines, individuals and disability organisations). The CAA strongly recommends this be done in the form of a note of each meeting and, in addition, an 'annual report' from the chair or an airport representative.
35. The CAA strongly recommends that each airport seeks feedback from members of their accessibility forum once a year on their views on the effectiveness of the forum.

Chapter 4

Monitoring performance against quality standards

36. Paragraph 9.1 of the ECAC Code specifies also that there should be “regular reviews to monitor the service provider’s performance against the quality standards and to continually improve performance-monitoring systems.” Further it states that service providers “should be expected to introduce their own performance monitoring systems and to provide reasonable data as required by the airport community”.
37. Airports should collect data that measures performance in relation to the quality standards document. Each airport should submit to the CAA information on its performance against its quality standards twice yearly (generally on a seasonal basis and within one month after each season).
- performance against ECAC quantitative metrics
 - the results of any in-house and CAA passenger surveys
 - outputs of ‘Accessibility Forums’
 - incidents where a passenger’s flight has departed without them
 - incidents where a passenger’s connecting flight has been missed
 - incidents where assistance is not available at the gate / aircraft side within 45 minutes of on chocks for arriving passengers.
38. In addition, each airport should publish on its website information on
- performance against ECAC quantitative metrics
 - outputs of ‘Accessibility Forums’.

Chapter 5

Definition of rankings

Definition of rankings from 2019 (and from 2020)

Good

This means the following:

Departing passengers

- Over the whole year, 99% (99%) of all departing notified disabled passengers and those with reduced mobility are provided with assistance within 30 minutes of making themselves known at a designated point.
- Over the whole year, 99% (99%) of all departing non-notified disabled passengers and those with reduced mobility are provided with assistance within 45 minutes of making themselves known at a designated point.
- The airport scores an average rating of 3.5 (where 1 is very poor and 5 is excellent) or better in the satisfaction survey of users.

Arriving passengers

- Over the whole year, for at least 97% (98%) of arriving pre-notified disabled passengers and those with reduced mobility, assistance is available for each passenger within 20 minutes from 'on chocks'.
- Over the whole year, for at least 97% (98%) of arriving non-notified disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility, assistance is available for each passenger within 45 minutes from 'on chocks'.
- The airport consistently meets any "continuous journey" standards for arriving passengers individually agreed with the CAA.
- The airport scores an average rating of 3.5 (where 1 is very poor and 5 is excellent) or better in the satisfaction survey of users.

Oversight and engagement

- The airport publishes on its website, and submits to the CAA, information as set out in paragraphs 37 and 38.
- The airport has robust processes in place for overseeing how it measures its performance; or, where relevant, the CAA has accepted commitments from the airport to strengthen this oversight.
- The airport routinely collects email addresses and sends satisfaction surveys to users of the service, with both physical and 'hidden' disabilities.

- The airport engages effectively with disability organisations through an ‘Accessibility Forum’.

Very good

Departing passengers

- Over the whole year, 99% (99%) of all departing notified disabled passengers and those with reduced mobility are provided with assistance within 30 minutes of making themselves known at a designated point.
- Over the whole year, 99% (99%) of all departing non-notified disabled passengers and passengers with reduced mobility are provided with assistance within 45 minutes of making themselves known at a designated point.
- The airport scores a rating of 4 or better in the satisfaction survey of users (where 1 is very poor and 5 is excellent).

Arriving passengers

- Over the whole year, for at least 98% (99%) of arriving pre-notified disabled passengers and those with reduced mobility, assistance is available within 20 minutes from ‘on chocks’.
- Over the whole year, for at least 98% (99%) of arriving non-notified disabled passengers and those with reduced mobility, assistance is available for each passenger within 45 minutes from ‘on chocks’.
- The airport consistently meets any “continuous journey” standards for arriving passengers individually agreed with the CAA.
- The airport scores a rating of 4 or better in the satisfaction survey of users (where 1 is very poor and 5 is excellent).

Oversight and engagement

- The airport publishes on its website, and submits to the CAA, information as set out in paragraphs 37 and 38.
- The airport has robust processes in place for overseeing how it measures its performance; or, where relevant, the CAA has accepted commitments from the airport to strengthen this oversight.
- The airport routinely collects email addresses and sends satisfaction surveys to users of the service, with both physical and ‘hidden’ disabilities.
- The airport engages effectively with disability organisations through an ‘Accessibility Forum’.

Needs improvement

- Over the course of the reporting year the airport has failed to meet all the criteria for a ‘good’ performance standard. However, the airport has taken the necessary

steps during the year to identify the issues with its assistance service and to agree a plan with the CAA to improve its performance.

Or;

- Over the course of the reporting year the airport has failed to provide the CAA with the required information on its performance.

Poor

- Over the course of the reporting year the airport has failed to meet all the criteria for a 'good' performance standard. Further, the airport has not taken the necessary steps during the year to identify the issues with its assistance service and to agree a plan with the CAA to improve its performance.