

CAA Accessibility Assessment Report: Bristol Airport – CAP3264 August 2026



Background and objectives

1. The UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) enforces Assimilated Regulation (EU) No. 1107/2006 on the rights of disabled persons and those with reduced mobility when travelling by air ("the Regulation"). This applies to all UK departures and flights to the UK on UK or EU carriers. This regulation ensures equal access to air travel, including rights to free movement, freedom of choice, and non-discrimination.
2. For airport obligations under the Regulation, the CAA conducts oversight through two workstreams:
 - **Airports Accessibility Framework (CAP 1228):** a standardised method of assessing UK airports in the provision of assistance for disabled and less mobile passengers. This framework sets out a rating approach to assess the provision of assistance by airports, which considers both legal obligations of airports (to ensure minimum standards are maintained) and good practice (to drive continuous improvement in the provision of assistance). The CAA publishes an annual report assessing UK airports against this framework every summer.
 - **Periodic "Deep Dive" accessibility assessments of individual airports across the UK:** these assessments review all aspects of the provision of assistance to disabled and less mobile passengers against airport obligations set out under the Regulation and all key guidance associated. The assessments look to identify examples of good practice to drive improvement across all UK airports, as well as making observations and identifying findings or improvements that need to be made at the individual airport.
3. This programme of airport accessibility assessments and the subsequent closure of findings and observations is about improving the experience of disabled and less mobile passengers when travelling through UK airports. The issues identified, such as the availability and visibility of assistance call points, clarity of information, accessibility of infrastructure, staff training, and the provision of independent journey options, directly affects a passenger's ability to travel with confidence. This work supports better consumer outcomes by ensuring that disabled and less mobile passengers can access air travel on an equitable basis, with greater independence, choice, and confidence.

4. To improve transparency and share good practice, airport accessibility reports are published annually alongside the Accessibility Framework results.
5. This report presents the findings of the CAA's assessment of Bristol Airport.

Methodology

6. The CAA assesses airports against the following regulations and guidance:
 - Assimilated Regulation (EU) No. 1107/2006 concerning the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air ("the Regulation")
 - CAP2241 Interpretative guidelines on the application of The Regulation("CAP2241")
 - ECAC Doc. 30 Part 5 and annexes 5-A-5-L ("ECAC Doc. 30")
 - CAP1228 CAA guidance on quality standards ("CAP1228")
 - CAP1228A CAA guidance on data collection under CAP1228 ("CAP1228A")
 - CAP1411 CAA guidance on hidden disabilities ("CAP1411")
 - CAP2374 CAA guidance on assistance service at UK airports ("CAP 2374")
 - Department for Transport REAL Training: introduction and aviation modules ("DFT REAL Training")
 - Department for Transport Inclusive Mobility: A guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure¹ ("DFT Inclusive Mobility")
7. To undertake an assessment, the CAA seeks information from an airport in the form of a standard questionnaire. Following receipt of a response, the CAA will ask follow up questions, request additional information and documentation, and undertake site visits and interviews. These are set out in Appendix A. Work was conducted between September 2025 and March 2026.

¹ Inclusive Mobility. A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure

8. The table below sets out a timeline of the collection of information and site visits undertaken as part of the assessment of Bristol Airport:

Data type	Description of the data	When was the data collected
Questionnaire response	Information on: ▪ airport structure, ▪ charging, ▪ airport assistance, ▪ designated points, ▪ seating, ▪ training, ▪ quality standards, ▪ non-visible disabilities, ▪ personal mobility equipment, ▪ airport infrastructure, ▪ service level agreements between Bristol and their service provider, ▪ survey of assistance service users.	September 2025
CAA observations	Disability equality and awareness training	April 2026
Online	Bristol Airport's website ²	February 2026
Site visit	Walk through of passenger journey	December 2025
Site visit	Second walk through of passenger journey	April 2026
Site visit	Observations of training for staff who provide direct assistance to passengers.	April 2026

9. The final report was shared with Bristol Airport on 4 August 2026.

² [Special Assistance | Accessibility at Bristol Airport](#)

Findings and observations

10. Where the CAA identifies an area of non-compliance with legislation or, in its view, guidance which should be followed to ensure compliance, a finding will be raised. Airports should ensure their accessibility forums, and the CAA, are kept up to date with findings and the actions they are taking to resolve them.
11. An observation is raised where the CAA identifies an area in which the airport should consider taking action to avoid future non-compliance with legislation, or situations where recommendations are not being followed. We expect airports to take this advice seriously and act on it appropriately. They should also consult their accessibility forums or disability organisations to decide their appropriate next steps. The CAA will request information on actions taken.
12. A summary of findings and observations for the accessibility assessment of Bristol Airport are detailed below.

13. Designated points

Area: Entry and exit points

Issue level: Finding (Rectified before publication)

Comments: Paragraph 5 of the Introductory text to the Regulation states that designated points should be located at least in car parks and drop off points, and Article 5 states that such points must be appropriately signed. ECAC Doc. 30 Section 5.11.3, Annex 5-C and 5-K provides recommendations on locations and signage.

During the site visit, we observed that only one level of the multi-storey car park contained a designated call point, located where Blue Badge spaces were situated. Other levels did not include designated points, call points, or signage directing passengers to the assistance service.

Update: Following engagement with the CAA, Bristol Airport has installed signage on each level of the multi-storey car park, providing information on how passengers can request assistance. A contact telephone number is included. This approach was developed in consultation with the airport's Accessibility Forum.

14. Designated points

Area: Seating

Issue level: Observation (Rectified before publication)

Comments: ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-K, Section 4 recommends accessible seating at designated points where passengers may wait for assistance.

The CAA observed that seating at some designated points was either absent or not suitable for disabled and less mobile passengers. For example, seating at the 'Waiting Area' (free drop off zone), 'Car Hire Village' and 'Silver Zone Car Park bus stops was low, soft, and lacked armrests and back support.

Update: Following engagement with the CAA, Bristol Airport has installed accessible seating at the 'Silver Zone Car Park', 'Waiting Area' and 'Car Hire Village' bus stops.

15. Designated points

Area: Signage and information

Issue level: Finding (Rectified before publication)

Comments: Paragraph 5 of the Introductory text of the Regulation and Annex 5-J of ECAC Doc. 30 states that designated points should be located in areas within the airport boundary. They should be located at least in car parks and drop off points, and Article 5(2) states that such points must be appropriately signed.

The CAA observed that the free drop-off facility 'Waiting Area' and associated transport area at the 'Car Hire Village' did not provide clear information for passengers requiring assistance. Signage did not include walking distances or instructions on how to request assistance, and information at the bus stops serving the terminal was limited. Similar gaps were identified at the 'Silver Zone Car Park'. Bristol Airport advised that the 'Silver Zone Car Park', 'Car Hire Village' and 'Waiting Area' (free drop off zone) are within the airport boundary.

Update: Following engagement with the CAA, Bristol Airport has improved signage at the free drop-off zone 'Waiting Area' to include walking distances and information on how to request assistance.

Additional signage has been installed at the bus stops and within the 'Silver Zone Car Park' transport interchange to clearly guide passengers requiring assistance.

16. CAP2374 – independent journeys

Area: Signage

Issue level: Observation (Rectified before publication)

Comments: CAP2374 recommends providing walking distance information to encourage self-mobilisation where appropriate.

The CAA observed that walking distances were displayed in some areas of the passenger journey; however, additional locations were identified where this information could further support independent travel.

Update: Following engagement with the CAA, Bristol Airport has added walking distance information to signage in additional areas, including the free drop-off zone 'Waiting Area'. Further enhancements will be implemented as part of an ongoing signage improvement programme.

17. Training

Area: Security personnel training

Issue level: Observation (Rectified before publication)

Comments: Article 11 of the Regulation and ECAC Doc. 30 states that all airport personnel who deal directly with the travelling public to be made aware of and, where appropriate, be able to meet the needs of, disabled and less mobile passengers. In accordance with ECAC Doc. 30 and DfT REAL Training, which outline the content and delivery for staff training, a review of Bristol Airport's third-party security provider's training material has identified areas for potential improvement:

- CAP1141 highlights that, during security screening, individuals with non-visible disabilities should never be separated from their accompanying persons. This is not addressed within the training materials provided.
- The training content does not mention the social model of disability. The DfT REAL Training advocates for the social model of disability as the foundational approach for training delivery, aiming to shift perceptions to remove obstacles that hinder disabled individuals' participation in society. The social model of disability recognises that people are disabled by societal barriers such as those within the built environment, operational processes, and customer service interactions rather than disability arising solely from an individual's disability or medical condition.

- ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-G provides content which should be covered in disability awareness and equality training in 'Module 1'.
- During our review it was noted that 'Section A – Legislation, Codes and Recommended Practices' was not included in the material provided. Additionally, disability awareness for passengers travelling with assistance dogs was not covered in the material provided.

Update: Following engagement with the CAA, the airport's security provider has updated its training content to address these gaps. The revised training incorporates additional material in line with ECAC Doc. 30 and DfT REAL Training principles, with a rollout to staff completed by 15 June 2026.

18. Website

Area: Information on how to obtain assistance

Issue level: Finding (Rectified before publication)

Comments: Under the Regulation, airports cannot refuse assistance based solely on whether a passenger has prebooked assistance. Where a passenger has not prebooked assistance, the airport must still make all reasonable efforts to assist the passenger to their flight and provide assistance to and from a designated point of arrival and departure. ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J Section 3 states that airport websites should include information how to obtain assistance, including prebooking with airlines and how to access assistance when travelling.

The CAA noted that information on how to access assistance was incomplete. In particular, there was no information on designated points of arrival and departure, and messaging on the website suggested that assistance must be pre-booked through airlines.

Update: Following engagement with the CAA, references to mandatory pre-booking have been removed. The website now includes information on how to access assistance at designated points and via the hosted assistance desk.

19. Website

Area: Information on getting to the airport

Issue level: Finding (Rectified before publication)

Comments: ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J Section 3 states that information on getting to the airport should be provided. This should include accessible 'Blue Badge' parking options, drop off arrangements and links to accessibility information on third party operator websites.

The CAA found that the 'Special Assistance' section of the website did not provide comprehensive information on travelling to and from the airport, including public transport and taxi options. Relevant information was available elsewhere on the website but was not clearly linked to.

Additionally, website content stated that assistance was not available in the 'Waiting Zone' (free drop-off area), which is within the airport boundary and therefore falls within the airport's responsibility under the Regulation.

Update: Following engagement with the CAA, references to the lack of assistance in the 'Waiting Zone' have been removed. The website now provides improved information on how to access assistance from car parks and arrival points, including links from relevant pages. Additional information has also been added to the 'FAQs' section with information on the accessibility of third-party public transport operators.

20. Website

Area: Information on the layout of the airport

Issue level: Observation (Rectified before publication)

Comments: ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J Section 3 recommends that airport websites provide both maps and indicative walking distances.

The CAA observed that, while terminal maps were available, information on walking distances between key points within the airport was limited. It was noted that during the assessment, building work was ongoing therefore walking distances and routes may change or be temporary until completion.

Update: Information on walking times between car parks and the terminal, and distances to the departure gates is included in the 'FAQs' area of the 'Assisted Travel' pages. This is being further updated to include distances as well as the estimated time.

21. Website

Area: Information on airport security

Issue level: Observation (Rectified before publication)

Comments: ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J Section 3 states that information on arrangements for mobility and medical equipment and the availability of private search rooms should be provided on airport websites.

We noted that information on security arrangements for passengers requiring assistance, including the availability of private search rooms, was not clearly available on the airport's website

Update: Information on private search room availability has been added to the website within the 'Medicines and medical aids' section.

22. Website

Area: Information on mobility equipment

Issue level: Observation (Rectified before publication)

Comments: ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J Section 3 sets out that information should be provided for passengers' travelling with mobility equipment, including as a minimum: information on using own equipment until boarding and repatriation of personal mobility equipment at the aircraft side; preparing equipment for travel; and for lost and damaged equipment on arrival.

We noted that website information on travelling with mobility equipment was incomplete, including a lack of guidance on arrangements for lost or damaged equipment.

Update: The airport has updated its website to include information on preparing mobility aids for travel and processes for reporting and managing lost or damaged equipment. This information is provided across relevant web pages and FAQs.

23. Website

Area: Information on assistance dogs

Issue level: Observation (Rectified before publication)

Comments: ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J Section 3 states that airports should provide information on the arrangements in place for travelling with an assistance dog.

The CAA observed that information on travelling with assistance dogs was incomplete, including details on both approved organisations and the location of relief areas.

Update: The airport has updated its website to include additional approved organisations and information on the location and use of assistance dog relief areas.

24. Website

Area: Information on the helpline

Issue level: Observation (Rectified before publication)

Comments: We noted that a dedicated helpline for assisted travel enquiries was not clearly available on the airport's website, as recommended in ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J Section 3.

Update: A helpline for assisted travel enquiries has been introduced and is accessible via the website's chat function.

25. Website

Area: Information on how to complain

Issue level: Observation (Rectified before publication)

Comments: The CAA noted that information on how to submit complaints regarding assistance services was not clearly linked from the assistance pages, as recommended in ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J Section 3.

Update: The website has been updated to include clear links from the 'Special Assistance' pages to contact and complaints information.

26. Website

Area: Title for hyperlinks

Issue level: Observation

Comments: ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J states that the 'title' for hyperlinks to this information should be "Special Assistance" or similar and include a relevant image, for instance a wheelchair.

The CAA observed that while the 'Special Assistance' link was clearly titled, it did not include recognised accessibility iconography, such as the international wheelchair symbol.

Good practices

27. Through airport accessibility assessments of UK airports, the CAA seeks to identify best practice at airports in their assistance service processes, equipment, and infrastructure. Publication of these reports will help share good practice between airports, airlines, service providers and passengers.

28. The following areas of best practice have been identified as part of our assessment of Bristol Airport:

29. Designated points of arrival

The Public Transport Interchange kiosk is staffed during busy periods, providing an accessible and visible point for passengers requiring assistance. Wheelchairs are also made available at this location to support independent journeys where appropriate. These promote independence while ensuring assistance is readily accessible in key transport interchange areas.

An innovative approach was observed at the designated point located within the on-site hotel, where hotel reception staff use an online form system to raise assistance pick-up requests directly with the airport. This enables the airport's service provider to receive real-time notifications and allocate staff efficiently. Embedding digital request processes within third-party locations enhances responsiveness and extends the accessibility network beyond the terminal.

30. Training

Bristol Airport demonstrated a collaborative approach to training design and delivery. Training content is co-created with the airport's service provider and reviewed by Bristol's Airport Accessibility Forum, ensuring it reflects lived experience and user needs. In addition, the airport advised that new business partner contracts include clauses requiring compliance with training standards, embedding accountability across the airport campus.

Security staff receive in-person disability awareness and training relating to non-visible disabilities, supported by mandatory annual refresher training. Training modules incorporate knowledge check questions throughout, requiring completion before progression. This structured approach supports retention of knowledge and consistent service delivery, in line with ECAC Doc. 30 recommendations on staff competence.

31. Non-visible disabilities and independent journeys

Processes are in place to support passengers with non-visible disabilities, including sunflower lanyard users. Passengers are required to collect a self-mobilisation card from the assistance desk. If passengers require assistance to board the aircraft, they are told when and where to meet assistance staff nearer the time of their flight. This

process enables staff to identify and support passengers who wish to travel independently while still benefiting from reasonable adjustments.

Signage on the departures journey, including from the departure hall to the gates, shows walking distance information. Banks of wheelchairs for passengers to take are available in various areas of the arrivals and departures journeys.

Bristol Airport's sensory room is reported by the airport to be heavily used, indicating strong demand and awareness among passengers. The provision of a dedicated, calming environment aligns with good practice for supporting passengers with neurodiverse conditions, anxiety, or sensory sensitivities, and contributes positively to the overall passenger experience.

Appendix A – Collaboration with members of staff

A1. Interviews were facilitated by the CAA team and tailored to the subject matter. Some interviews took the form of presentations of system processes and outputs by Bristol Airport staff.

Summary of works undertaken

A2. Pre visit questionnaire and attachments

Topics Covered:

- Airport structure,
- Charging,
- Airport assistance,
- Designated points,
- Seating,
- Training,
- Quality standards,
- Hidden disabilities,
- Personal mobility equipment,
- Airport infrastructure.

Work performed:

- Questionnaire was completed by Bristol Airport.
- The questionnaire was reviewed by the CAA before the site visit.
- Reviewed answers and provided more detail and explanation where required.

A3. Walk through of the passenger journey and checks of equipment

Topics Covered:

- Designated points,
- Seating,
- Hidden disabilities,
- Airport infrastructure,
- Seating,
- Signage.

Work performed:

CAA checked:

- Useability and serviceability of designated points,
- Access points to the airport e.g., car parks,
- Equipment levels e.g., wheelchairs available for self-mobilisation,
- Observed signage in landside and airside areas,
- Seating and other facilities designed for disabled and less mobile passengers.

A4. Airport tour

Topics Covered:

- Airport infrastructure,
- Quality standards,
- Hidden disabilities,
- Independent travel,
- Airport equipment,
- System demos (included walking through the journey for an arriving and departing passenger on a PDA),
- Further explanation of processes and policies,
- Explanation of facilities and future development plans.

A5. Follow up

Topics Covered:

Follow up sessions, observations, and interviews on:

- Training of staff providing direct assistance to disabled and less mobile passengers,
- Training of security staff,
- Training of customer facing airport staff.

Work performed:

Information provided on training for:

- Staff who provide direct assistance to disabled and less mobile passengers.
- Security staff.
- Customer facing airport staff.

A6. Compliance review

Topics Covered: Website review

Work performed: The CAA conducted a desktop review of Bristol Airport's website in line with guidance on website in ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J.

A7. Compliance review

Topics Covered: Training

Work performed: Training of staff who provide direct assistance to disabled and less mobile passengers.

Work performed: Observations of the disability and equality training modules for new starters. ABM's training was reviewed in line with training guidance in ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-G and DfT's REAL Training.