



CAA Accessibility Assessment Report: Cardiff 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 (CAP1228):** a standardised method of assessing UK airports in the provision of assistance to 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 sets out the findings of the CAA's assessment of the accessibility of Cardiff 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 Assimilated Regulation (EU) No. 1107/2006 ("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 ("CAP2374")
 - 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 to this, the CAA will ask follow up questions, request additional information and documentation, and undertake site visits and interviews.

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 Cardiff 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, ▪ survey of assistance service users.	October 2025
Questionnaire response	Assisted travel complaints and queries	November 2025
Online	Cardiff Airport's website ²	November 2025
Site visit	Walk through of passenger journey	December 2025
Site visit	Performance checks	December 2025

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

² Cardiff Airport - Special Assistance – CWL

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 airport 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 Cardiff Airport are set out below.

13. Airport assistance

Area: Assistance dogs

Issue level: Observation

Comments: ECAC Doc. 30 Section 5.13.18 states that facilities designated for disabled and less mobile passengers should be appropriately signposted.

While both airside and landside dog relief areas are available, we observed that there was no information on the locations or process, or wayfinding to direct passengers to these facilities. The airside dog relief area requires an escort by airport staff.

14. Training

Area: Training

Issue level: Finding

Comments: Paragraph (10) of the Regulation states that 'airports and air carriers should have regard to Document 30 of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) Part I Section 5 and its associated Annexes'. As part of the assessment process, the CAA requested Cardiff Airport completed the training matrix, as set out in ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-G.

The training matrix was not provided in full by the airport; therefore, the CAA was unable to check the total number of staff who were trained in each area against the matrix.

15. Training

Area: Module 1 content

Issue level: Finding

Comments: Article 11 of the Regulation requires that airports provide disability equality and disability awareness training to all personnel working at the airport. ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-G Module 1 provides further information on the required training provision for disability equality and disability awareness training that should be provided to all staff who deal directly with the travelling public, for them to be made aware of, and where appropriate, be able to meet the needs of assistance passengers.

The CAA reviewed Cardiff Airport's current training. We identified that the training content did not fully align with the content specified in Module 1 (disability equality and disability awareness), attachment 1 to Annex 5-G, ECAC Doc. 30. In particular, the training content contained limited or no coverage of several required elements specified in Module 1, including relevant legislation, codes and recommended practices, disability awareness topics, and key knowledge and competency areas relating to the needs of disabled passengers and persons with reduced mobility.

16. Training

Area: Module 2 content

Issue level: Finding

Comments: In addition to the requirements set out in Module 1 of ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-G; Module 2 relates to the training provision for staff that provide direct assistance to disabled and less mobile passengers at the airport.

We identified that the training content did not fully align with the content specified in Module 2 (assistance provision at the airport), attachment 1 to Annex 5-G, ECAC Doc. 30. In particular, there was only partial or no coverage of several required training areas and competencies, including assistance for passengers with cognitive impairments and non-visible disabilities, assistance throughout the airport journey, support for passengers travelling with service animals, techniques for assisting blind and partially sighted passengers, and awareness of the vulnerabilities that some passengers may experience during travel.

17. Training

Area: General training content

Issue level: Observation

Comments: Article 11 of the Regulation and ECAC Doc. 30 states that all airport personnel who deal directly with the travelling public to be trained to be made aware of and, where appropriate, be able to meet the needs of, disabled and less mobile passengers. In addition to the items identified above, other areas for further development of content were identified:

- Assisted travel areas: Information regarding the location and availability of assisted travel areas, both landside and airside, was not identified within the training materials.
- Assistance dog relief areas: Information on the location and availability of assistance dog relief areas, both landside and airside, was not identified within the training materials.
- Social model of disability: 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 impairment or condition. Consideration should be given to embedding this approach further within Cardiff Airport's disability equality and disability awareness training content.

18. Training

Area: Security staff

Issue level: Observation

Comments: Section 5 of the DfT's REAL Training Programme Manual for Trainers indicates that disability equality and awareness training should be delivered in person, with testing and/or assessment undertaken through classroom-based activities, oral and written exercises, or written assessments undertaken under controlled conditions.

Cardiff Airport confirmed that all security staff have completed non-visible disability awareness training, which is delivered via e-learning. Additionally, the airport confirmed that only some security staff have received additional training relating to other non-visible disabilities, including autism awareness, stoma awareness, and sighted-guide techniques.

19. Training

Area: Internal trainer requirements

Issue level: Observation

Comments: Annex 5-G of ECAC Doc. 30 and Section 4 of the DfT's REAL Training Programme Manual for Trainers both set out that disability awareness training, including training delivered internally, should be delivered by trainers with appropriate competence and experience, with expertise gained by recognised external disability organisations. Consideration could therefore be given to ensuring that in-house trainers delivering non-visible disability awareness training receive external training to support in training preparation and delivery.

In its questionnaire response, Cardiff Airport confirmed that in-house trainers responsible for physical disability training have attended externally delivered courses. However, in-house trainers have not attended training courses relating specifically to non-visible disabilities delivered by an external training provider.

20. Infrastructure

Area: Parking and entry points

Issue level: Observation

Comments: ECAC Doc. 30 Section 5.13.18 requires airports to ensure that installations reserved for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility are appropriately signed using internationally agreed standards.

Section 8.3 of the DfT's Inclusive Mobility guidance advises that off-street parking and car parks provided by transport providers should clearly mark areas reserved for Blue Badge holders using both road markings and vertical signs (by way of a raised sign at the head of designated bays), to ensure that the purpose of the bay is apparent should road markings become faded or obscured.

During the CAA site visit, whilst it was noted that Blue Badge parking areas have appropriate road markings and are located adjacent to well-signposted designated assistance waiting areas/call points, the airport should consider adding additional vertical signs to clearly distinguish these designated parking bays from general parking bays should markings become faded or obscured.

21. Website

Area: Information on assistance provided at the airport

Issue level: Observation

Comments: ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J Section 3 requires airports to specify, at a minimum, the types of assistance provided at the airport.

The CAA noted that only basic information was provided on the 'Special Assistance' webpage regarding the provision of various types of assistance which can be provided to meet a passenger's individual needs.

22. Website

Area: Information on how to obtain assistance

Issue level: Observation

Comments: ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J Section 3 requires airports to provide information on how to obtain assistance.

During review, the CAA noted that the website does not provide information on where passengers should announce their arrival at the airport. In addition, the website states that passengers should always pre-book assistance with their airline or travel agent. While pre-booking should be encouraged, the website should also make clear that assistance remains available to passengers who have not pre-booked, in line with the requirements of the Regulation.

23. Website

Area: Information on getting to the airport

Issue level: Observation

Comments: ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J Section 3 sets out that airports should provide information on their websites regarding transport options for getting to the airport, including any specific rules or charges applied to persons with reduced mobility when using drop-off zones.

We noted that, whilst basic information was identified on the 'Special Assistance for Parking' webpage, consideration could be given for the inclusion of information on specific drop-off arrangements for Blue Badge holders.

24. Website

Area: Information on the layout of the airport

Issue level: Observation

Comments: ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J Section 3 highlights the importance of providing clear and accessible information to support passenger orientation.

A webpage titled 'Facilities at the airport' was identified within the 'Special Assistance' area of the airport's website: however, this page is not directly linked to from the main 'Special Assistance' page. This webpage contains useful information on walking distances within the airport terminal. In addition to information on walking distances, consideration could be given to the inclusion of a simple visual map illustrating the terminal layout.

26. Website

Area: Information on airport security

Issue level: Observation

Comments: ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J Section 3 sets out that airports should provide information on their websites relating to any special arrangements for disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility in relation to security.

We noted that the 'Special Assistance' page includes a link to a webpage providing general security information applicable to all passengers. However, the CAA was unable to identify information specific to security arrangements for passengers with reduced mobility or other assistance needs. Consideration could be given to adding specific information regarding accessible security arrangements, such as the screening and handling of mobility and medical equipment, and information on the availability of dedicated security lanes and private search rooms.

27. Website

Area: Information on mobility equipment

Issue level: Observation

Comments: ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J Section 3 sets out that airports should provide information on their websites for passengers travelling with their own mobility equipment. At a minimum, this should include information on use of personal mobility equipment up to the point of boarding, repatriation of mobility equipment on arrival at the aircraft side, preparation of equipment for travel, and arrangements for the

provision of temporary replacement mobility equipment in the event that a passenger's equipment is lost or damaged on arrival.

During a review of Cardiff Airport's website, this information was not found.

28. Website

Area: Information on assistance dogs

Issue level: Observation

Comments: ECAC Doc. 30 Annex 5-J Section 3 sets out that information for passengers travelling with assistance dogs, including processes and facilities, should be clearly provided to passengers.

The CAA was unable to identify general information on the airport's website regarding the acceptance of and arrangements for passengers travelling with assistance dogs, as well as information on the availability and location of assistance dog relief areas.

29. Website

Area: Information on how to complain

Issue level: Observation

Comments: We noted that, whilst the airport's contact telephone number and email address are provided on the 'Special Assistance' page, the CAA was unable to identify specific information for passengers wishing to make a complaint: specifically, how complaints relating to assistance services can be submitted, how they will be handled, and the expected timescales for response.

30. CAP2374 - independent journeys

Area: Signage

Issue level: Observation

Comments: In line with the principles set out in CAP2374 relating to the promotion of independent journeys, consideration should be given to the introduction of signage or posters at key stages of the passenger journey to encourage independent journeys where passengers are able and willing to do so.

During the CAA's site visit, it was observed that there was a plentiful supply of wheelchairs available at the landside assistance desk, enabling passengers to travel through the airport independently or to be assisted by family members or companions. However, the CAA did not identify any signage or on-site information

advising passengers of the availability of wheelchairs for the purpose of undertaking a self-assisted journey.

Good practices

31. Through airport accessibility assessments of UK airports, the CAA seeks to identify good 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.

32. The following areas of good practice have been identified as part of our assessment of Cardiff Airport:

33. Assistance landside minibuses

Cardiff Airport provides a free-of-charge, landside minibus transfer service operated by the Special Assistance team, which can be requested by passengers requiring assistance either in advance or via call points located across the airport's car parks. This service enables collection from, or drop-off at, any car park across the airport site, including long-stay and remote parking areas. The minibus is fully accessible, incorporating a tail lift/ramp to accommodate passengers with reduced mobility and those travelling with mobility aids, supporting accessible journeys between the terminal and car parking facilities.

34. Familiarisation visits

The airport confirmed that familiarisation visits are hosted on a regular basis, with good uptake and are advertised on Cardiff Airport's website. These visits provide passengers with the opportunity to attend the airport in advance of their journey to meet assistance staff, discuss individual requirements, and experience both the outbound and inbound passenger journey through the airport. Familiarisation visits may be particularly beneficial for passengers with physical disabilities or reduced mobility, as they provide individuals with the opportunity to experience and visualise, for example, distances, accessible routes, lift access, and assistance arrangements in advance. Such visits can also support passengers to become familiar with the terminal environment and assistance processes, which may help reduce uncertainty and build confidence ahead of travel.

35. Staff training - Aircraft cabin seating mock-up

During the site visit, the CAA observed that the assistance team at Cardiff Airport maintains an on-site aircraft cabin seating mock-up, which is used to deliver both new starter and refresher training for assistance staff. The mock-up enables both new staff to be trained and existing staff to receive refresher training in the use of assistance equipment such as aisle chairs and hoists, as well as manual handling

techniques within the spatial constraints of an aircraft cabin, prior to operating in the live environment.

As part of the visit, the CAA also observed a full lift demonstration being conducted using the mock-up equipment, illustrating the practical application of training in a controlled setting that is delivered to assistance staff. This approach supports the delivery of practical, scenario-based training and aligns with the principles set out in Module 3 of ECAC Doc. 30 relating to training for the provision of assistance onboard aircraft.

Appendix A – Summary of works undertaken

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 Cardiff Airport staff.

A2. Pre visit questionnaire and attachments

Topics Covered:

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

Work performed:

Questionnaire was completed by Cardiff Airport. The questionnaire was reviewed by the CAA before the site visit.

A3. Walk through of passenger journey and checks of equipment

Topics Covered:

- Designated points,
- Seating,
- Non-visible disabilities,
- Airport infrastructure,
- Seating,
- Signage,
- Airport infrastructure,
- Quality standards,
- Independent travel,
- Airport equipment.

Work performed:

- Checked useability and serviceability of designated points,
- Checked access points to the airport e.g., car parks,
- Checked for equipment levels e.g., wheelchairs available for self-mobilisation,
- Observed signage in landside and airside areas,

- Checked seating and other facilities designed for disabled and less mobile passengers,
- Further explanation of processes and policies,
- Explanation of facilities and future development plans.

A4. 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.

A5. Compliance review

Topics Covered: Website

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