

Southampton Airport

SAJ Southampton
Airport

2025 PRM Report

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1. Executive Summary

This report outlines the efforts and initiatives undertaken by Southampton Airport in 2025 to support and enhance accessibility for passengers with reduced mobility (PRMs). The airport has continued its commitment to inclusivity, engagement with the community, service improvement, staff development, and adherence to Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) standards.

2. Overview of PRM Services

Southampton Airport provides comprehensive services for PRMs, including those with hidden disabilities. These services are in line with EU Regulation EC1107/2006 and UK CAA CAP1228 guidance. Key services include:

- Assistance from entry to departure and vice versa.
- Mobility aids including wheelchairs and ambulifts.
- Designated accessible seating and rest areas.
- Coordination with airlines for pre-notified and ad-hoc assistance.
- Accessibility signage and hearing loops.

3. Passenger Data and Service Volume

In 2025, Southampton Airport supported over 15,000 PRM passengers. Increased airline traffic has driven a 16% rise in PRM demand, placing particular pressure on operations during peak periods and with the higher frequency of Code C aircraft, which carry larger passenger volumes.

4. Service Performance

- 95.5% of all pre-notified PRM passengers were met within 10 minutes of arrival, and 99.8% of passengers were met within 20 minutes.

- All PRM agents use a GPS tracking system to ensure accurate timestamp tracking.
- Performance KPIs were consistently met or exceeded.
- PRM Assist App continued to improve planning, communication, and feedback collection.
- 38 compliments received with 9 complaints directly to the airport (separate from CAA feedback responses).

5. Staff Training and Awareness

All frontline PRM supporting airport staff are required to complete mandatory annual training, ensuring consistent standards across health and safety, customer care, and accessibility. This includes targeted PRM-specific modules focused on enhanced customer experience, safe people handling techniques, disability confidence, and improved awareness of hidden and non-visible disabilities.

Training is further strengthened through optional practical, hands-on activities that support real-world understanding, such as staff involvement in airport familiarisation visits for passengers with disabilities. Examples include supporting organised airport tours for groups with sensory impairments, such as partially sighted teenagers, enabling staff to better appreciate individual needs and apply learning in a meaningful, inclusive way.

6. Consultation and Feedback

- Bi-annual Accessibility Forum meetings were held in April and October 2025, in line with CAP1228 guidance, with attendance from airport representatives, assistance providers, local authorities, and disability charities.
- Stakeholder engagement was expanded in 2025, with regular consultation events, airport familiarisation visits, and community outreach sessions held throughout the year, exceeding CAA minimum consultation expectations.
- Ongoing partnership with Treloar's College continued through accessibility audits, student internships, ambassador activity, and the development of experiential and virtual airport familiarisation projects.
- Passenger feedback was gathered through multiple channels, including:
 - Direct passenger comments
 - The PRM Assist app
 - Written correspondence and phone calls
 - Feedback shared via charity partners and forum representatives
 - This ensured accessibility input from both digital and non-digital users.
- Specific service improvements were implemented following passenger feedback, including enhancements for deaf and hard-of-hearing passengers such as clearer gate communication, improved signage, and the introduction of manual boarding boards where required.

6a. CAA Feedback Summary

Overall Experience

Passenger feedback relating specifically to Southampton Airport during 2025 was strongly positive, with the majority of respondents rating assistance as Excellent across all stages of the journey. Southampton is consistently described as a friendly, professional and supportive airport, with assistance services meeting or exceeding passenger expectations.

Key Strengths Identified

- High satisfaction levels: The vast majority of Southampton respondents rated:
 - Assistance through the airport as Excellent
 - Boarding and seating support as Excellent
 - Staff helpfulness and courtesy as Excellent
- Staff professionalism and empathy were repeatedly highlighted, with descriptors such as:
 - Polite, personable and professional
 - Caring, respectful and reassuring
 - Friendly, welcoming and calm
- Consistency of service: Multiple comments note Southampton delivering a reliably high standard, particularly when compared with other UK and overseas airports.

Passengers specifically praised:

- Attentive support for those with reduced mobility, hidden disabilities, hearing loss and step-access needs
- Staff awareness of the needs of lone and vulnerable travellers
- Respectful handling of passengers, maintaining dignity and reassurance throughout the journey
- Smooth coordination between assistance teams and airlines where appropriate

Several respondents explicitly stated that:

- The service made their journey possible
- All aspects of assistance “met or exceeded expectations”
- They felt well looked after from start to finish

Passenger Profile

- Predominantly over 65 years old
- Common assistance needs included:
 - Walking longer distances
 - Using aircraft steps
 - General mobility support
- Assistance was commonly pre-booked more than 48 hours in advance, often via airline websites or travel agents.

Areas for Improvement (Isolated Feedback)

Negative or constructive feedback relating to Southampton was limited and largely operational rather than behavioural. Themes included:

- Occasional staffing pressures during busy periods
- Infrastructure constraints (e.g. lack of ramp availability on certain aircraft types)
- Passengers noting they were unsure at first about the full scope of assistance available, particularly from car park to terminal

Importantly, even within critical comments, staff attitude and willingness to help were still viewed positively, with challenges attributed to resources rather than people.

Comparative Perception

Where passengers referenced experiences at other airports, Southampton was frequently viewed more favourably, particularly in terms of:

- Staff conduct
- Communication quality
- Overall reliability of assistance

7. Infrastructure and Facilities

- Step-free access throughout terminal routes.
- Accessible restrooms.
- Procurement of two new Ambi-lift vehicles
- Terminal Transformation project underway in collaboration with our Access Forum users

8. Community and Educational Outreach

Southampton Airport continued partnerships with educational institutions such as Treloar’s and Totton College. Internships were hosted and training offered on employment pathways. Engagement events with local schools, BSL communities, and guide dog training exercises were conducted throughout the year.

9. Future Objectives (2026 and Beyond)

- Maintain the high standard of assistance delivered throughout 2025, with a continued focus on real-time assistance request tracking.
- Enhance wayfinding and passenger information, including the introduction of a video tour of the airport available via the Southampton Airport website.
- Continue to evolve staff training, incorporating lived-experience input and advanced disability awareness modules.
- Achieve a 'Very Good' rating in the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) accessibility audit.

10. Conclusion

Passenger Assistance at Southampton Airport in 2025 was widely viewed as high quality, well delivered and customer-focused. Feedback highlights a strong service culture founded on empathy, professionalism and respect, with staff consistently recognised as a key strength of the passenger experience.

While some opportunities remain to further improve awareness of available services and resilience during peak demand, overall sentiment confirms that Southampton Airport provides an assistance service that meets regulatory expectations and delivers genuine passenger confidence and reassurance.

Accessibility remains a core priority for Southampton Airport. Through a proactive approach to collaboration, infrastructure, training and community engagement, the airport continues to ensure that all passengers can expect a respectful, supportive and seamless journey.