

Bristol Airport Accessibility Forum (BRSAF) achievements 2025/26

Key achievements in 2025/26 (highlights)

- Provided pan-disability input into major infrastructure and passenger-flow projects (Passenger Transport Interchange and multi-storey car park, temporary Assisted Travel lounge, South Gates development, and Departure Lounge transformation), ensuring accessibility is built into design decisions early.
- Influenced the airport's washroom transformation strategy through detailed design feedback (signage, layout, materials, and accessibility features) ahead of targeted delivery in June 2026.
- Strengthened service consistency through disability awareness and customer-service training activity across Bristol Airport teams and key contractors, plus specialist autism training for frontline colleagues.
- Improved dignity and understanding at security screening for passengers with medical devices (e.g., stoma bags and insulin pumps) through awareness initiatives and enhanced training with the security provider.

The Bristol Airport Accessibility Forum (BRSAF) brings together pan-disability representation from the following organisations:

- Bristol Disability Equality Forum (BDEF)
- Bristol Dementia Action Alliance (BDAA)
- Bridging the Gap (autism charity)
- Bristol Sight Loss Council
- Colostomy UK
- Breakthrough T1D (diabetes charity)
- Guide Dogs
- Airport service users, including a customer experience consultant and a frequent traveller who also sits on the Bristol Airport Consultative Committee

Overview of 2025:

During 2025, members of the Bristol Airport Accessibility Forum (BRSAF) were kept informed of ECAC performance updates and invited to provide input across a range of accessibility and inclusion initiatives.

A key focus was infrastructure development. BRSAF members worked with the airport's design team to review options for the Passenger Transport Interchange (PTI), including the new multi-storey car park, and contributed to concepts for a temporary Assisted Travel Lounge to support service continuity during wider construction works.

Further projects included the South Gates development (three new stand gates, a new coach forecourt, and a segregated Arrivals route). In parallel, BRSAF reviewed proposals for the transformation of the Departure Lounge (IDL), including terminal extensions to create additional retail and catering space, a new assistance lounge, improved access to Arrivals (wider stairways and additional lifts), and an expanded baggage reclaim area.

To enhance passenger experience, plans include increasing seating capacity by approximately 200 seats within the main terminal and a further 900 seats across catering areas, alongside additional accessible and family toilet facilities. Overall, the terminal extensions are expected to support up to 70% growth in capacity, while improving passenger flow, retail and catering provision, and the look and feel of the terminal; the Assisted Travel Lounge is also planned to be extended and refurbished.

Washroom transformation has been another major initiative. Under a new strategy, customer washrooms will be upgraded to provide inclusive, hygienic, and durable facilities, including male, female, accessible, and universal toilets, plus dedicated changing areas; completion is targeted for June 2025. BRSAF members provided design feedback on signage, materials, layout, and accessibility features to inform the final designs.

In addition, the forum reviewed proposals to improve services for Blue Badge holders within the Drop and Go parking facility and discussed concepts including a sensory room and a Quiet Zone within the temporary assistance facility to better support passengers with additional needs.

Training Initiatives:

BRSAF members reviewed the airport's disability awareness training approach, and several forum organisations were invited to help shape a refreshed disability awareness module for Bristol Airport colleagues and third-party stakeholders. This work continued into 2025, alongside a focus on consistent customer service across the airport environment.

To support a consistent shared service standard, Bristol Airport will mandate Disability Awareness Training for all on-site operators and make the Bristol Airport-developed course available to all based operators. This initiative will help reinforce a customer-focused and inclusive approach across key passenger touchpoints.

Bristol Airport also shared draft content from its Disability Awareness training module with forum members to gather feedback and identify opportunities to strengthen the material. In May 2025, a soft launch was delivered to targeted customer-facing teams (Ground Transportation and Terminal Operations) to obtain feedback ahead of full roll-out.

1. Clear and concise content: 84% positive (50 colleagues)
2. Accessible (simple and easy to navigate): 88% positive (50 colleagues)
3. Right length for the topic: 84% positive (50 colleagues)
4. Confidence in the topic covered: 82% positive (50 colleagues)

The module was then assigned to all Bristol Airport colleagues, resulting in 426 active enrolments; 91% of active colleagues had completed the course (389 completions) at the time of reporting. A gap analysis assessment was scheduled for November to identify any areas requiring further improvement or additional online and face-to-face training.

Face-to-face training remained limited in 2025; however, a face-to-face Disability Confidence course was completed by 22 senior colleagues, and this will continue to be rolled out across 2026 in order to ensure all customer facing airport staff receive current disability awareness and etiquette training.

Security initiatives:

Bristol Airport recently provided an update on its security screening processes following earlier discussions about passengers with stomas and diabetes, including those using insulin pumps, being more frequently

selected for additional checks. This increase is linked to the enhanced capabilities of next-generation security scanners, which are more sensitive in detecting anomalies during body scans.

As a result, Colostomy UK and Breakthrough T1D were invited to support the airport by contributing to further staff training and awareness initiatives, as well as helping inform their service users and beneficiaries about what to expect when travelling through security.

In addition, the airport hosted dedicated disability awareness training sessions focused on passengers with sight loss and other hidden conditions. These sessions were supported by Guide Dogs and the Sight Loss Councils.

Building on this successful collaboration, an Assisted Travel video was commissioned to better support passengers who prefer to travel independently. The aim is to empower individuals to manage their journey with confidence, while still having the option to access ABM assistance for specific parts of their airport experience if needed.

Inclusion and workplace accessibility initiatives:

In parallel, the airport's Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) approach was shared with forum members, to show how inclusion risks are assessed and mitigated when new projects, processes, or service changes are implemented. Examples were provided and discussed to help clarify the purpose of EIAs and how they help prevent unintentional disadvantage or exclusion for staff and passengers.

The airport also noted that its last inclusion survey was completed in 2023 and that there is an opportunity to strengthen organisational awareness of neurodiversity, alongside better support for colleagues who identify as disabled. This included an intention to work more closely with BRSAF to inform future disability awareness and neurodiversity training, helping to drive consistent customer service across the airport.

The airport shared that it had progressed from Level 2 to Level 3 as a Disability Confident Employer, recognising the commitment made by colleagues and the business to date. The update also highlighted further opportunities to improve workplace accessibility (including within and around the head office building) and to build confidence in supporting colleagues with non-visible conditions, reinforcing the need for strengthened disability awareness and etiquette training.

Looking ahead into 2026:

At the beginning of 2026, Bristol Airport invited members of the BRSAF on site to conduct an accessibility assessment of the Departures retail area. This review considered both staff engagement and the physical accessibility of shops, stores, and food and beverage outlets. As we continue into 2026, the valuable insights and feedback provided by BRSAF members will be shared with the commercial team to help shape future concepts and requirements when tendering new contracts, ensuring accessibility remains a key consideration in all future developments.