

# TRAVEL ADVICE

Andy Wright, managing director of Accessible Travel and Leisure, has a wealth of knowledge about travelling and knows firsthand about the problems many disabled people can face. Each issue Andy will provide us with advice on common problems of travel and will welcome questions from PosAbility readers.



To view Andy's Top Tips for air travel visit [www.posabilitymagazine.co.uk](http://www.posabilitymagazine.co.uk).

## AIR TRAVEL BECOMING EASIER

**Travelling overseas by air** can often be a very intimidating experience for many people with a disability, especially wheelchair users. What type of assistance will be offered by the airport when I fly? How do I request assistance? When I arrive at the airport, who do I contact and how? These are just some of the questions that have been difficult to find answers to before you travel.

Well fortunately, information about the special assistance services provided by airports has just become a little easier thanks to a new Civil Aviation Authority web directory. Last year the UK CAA used its information powers, to work with all UK airports and 50 major airlines to improve the special assistance information available on their own websites.

All UK airports and the vast majority of airlines have now updated their web pages with more comprehensive information, which is clearer to understand and displayed just one click away from their website's homepage. Their websites now include a helpline number, so passengers can pre-arrange special assistance and have information on how to complain. The single CAA webpage includes hyperlinks which go directly to the special assistance web

pages of all the UK's airports and the major airlines flying to and from the UK.

This means passengers with a disability or reduced mobility (PRM) can now quickly find links to essential information from one single source, including descriptions of the services provided, on how to pre-arrange special assistance, the location of drop off and pick up points at airports and any potential restrictions of specialist mobility equipment. The new web directory is part of the CAA's 'Your Right to Fly', which aims to improve the quality and accessibility of special assistance information available to passengers with reduced mobility.

Under EU regulations passengers with a disability and people with reduced mobility are legally entitled to free assistance when travelling by air. This may include help with travelling through an airport, boarding or disembarking an aircraft and during a flight. To guarantee this assistance, passengers must inform their airline of the type of support they require, at least 48 hours prior to take off.

Following research recently conducted by the CAA, it was determined that 78% of passengers with a disability, who requested their need for assistance in advance, were

either 'very satisfied' (54%) or 'satisfied' (24%) with their air travel experience.

Research suggested that one of the biggest barriers to flying was a lack of understanding and information about the specifically tailored special assistance, airports and airlines are legally obliged to provide to passengers with a disability.

With airlines and airports providing helpline numbers to pre-arrange assistance or descriptions of the services that are available to disabled people, air travel is now becoming more accessible for everyone.

**For more information about your local airport and what special assistance services they provide, please visit [www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?catid=2800&pageid=17079](http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?catid=2800&pageid=17079).**

