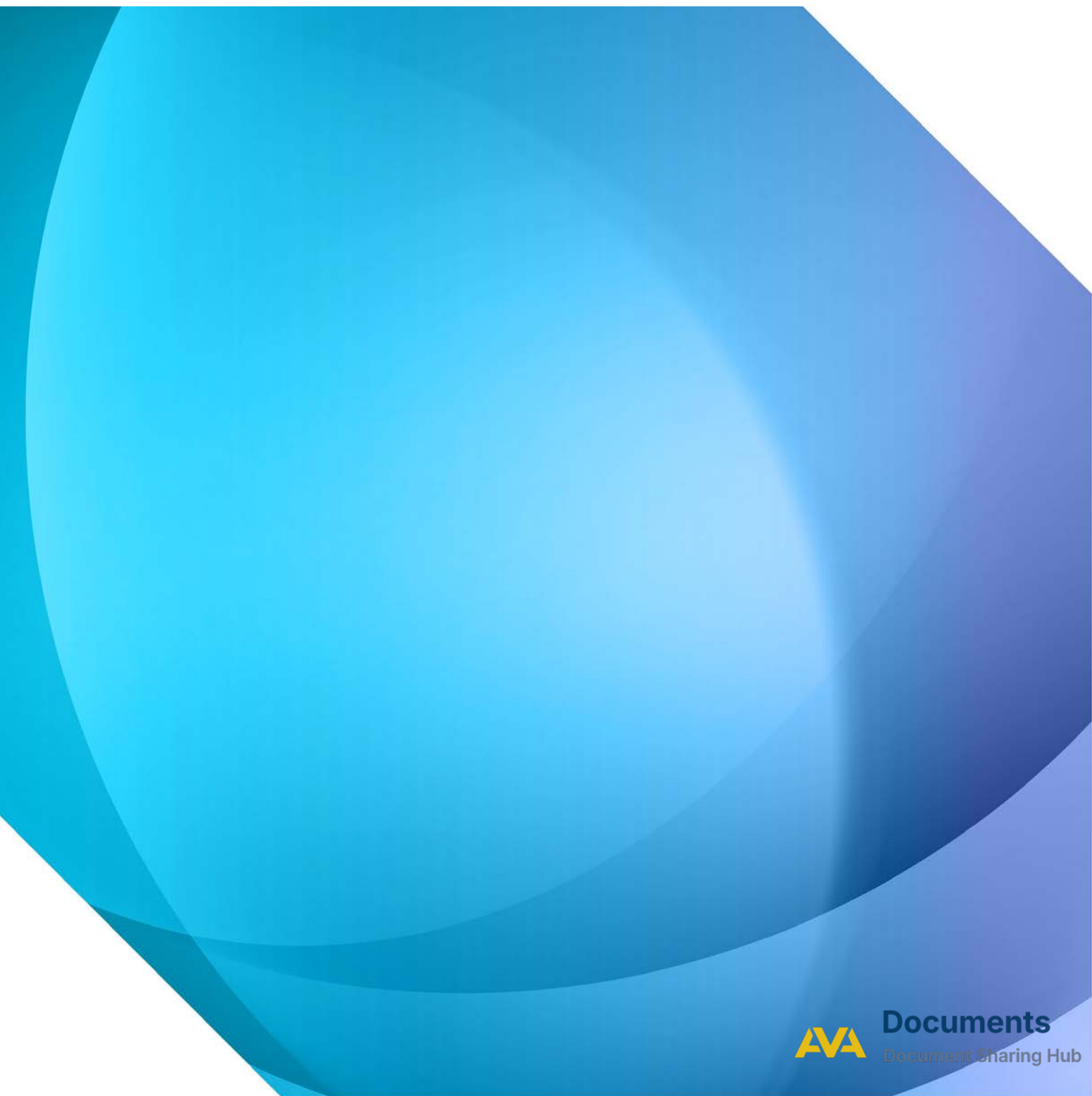


Guidance for airlines on assisting people with hidden disabilities

CAP 1603



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Introduction

1. In November 2016, the CAA published guidance for UK airports on providing assistance to people with hidden disabilities ([CAP1411](#)). We are now publishing similar guidance for airlines applicable to all flights from the UK and for flights to the UK on an EU registered airline. This guidance for airlines complements CAP1411. This guidance has been produced following discussions with a number of key disability organisations and a range of airlines. It has also been produced following in depth research by the CAA into the current processes used by airlines and airports to capture and transmit information about passengers' assistance needs when travelling by air. The results of this research have helped inform this guidance, particularly Chapter 2.
2. The aim of Regulation EC1107/2006 (the Regulation) concerning the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air is to ensure that disabled people have the same opportunities for air travel as non-disabled people, in particular that they have the same rights to free movement, freedom of choice and non-discrimination. The Regulation covers “any person whose mobility when using air transport is reduced due to any physical disability (sensory or locomotor, permanent or temporary), **intellectual disability or impairment**, or any other cause of disability, or age”. It is the CAA’s view, based on engagement with disability organisations, that hidden disabilities should be considered to include, but not be limited to, dementia, autism, learning disabilities, anxiety issues, mental health conditions, visual impairments and hearing loss. Hidden disabilities should also be considered to include non-visible physical disabilities such as epilepsy, respiratory conditions and chronic pain.
3. The CAA acknowledges that there are already examples of good practice by airlines. The purpose of this guidance is to build on the existing good practice by clarifying the requirements of the Regulation (in light of the relevant guidance from the CAA, the European Commission and European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC)) and making recommendations on best practice, where appropriate, in relation to providing assistance to people with hidden disabilities. This includes communication of information prior to travel and at the airport; obligations in regard to “pre-notification”; assistance at the airport for areas that are the responsibility of the airline; direct assistance onboard the aircraft; and assistance during flight disruptions. Although this is specific guidance on the Regulation, the CAA notes that it is good practice, and indeed would represent good customer service, for airlines to understand how hidden disabilities can affect passengers' experience of the whole customer journey and the implications of this for the service they provide. The CAA would support, and indeed encourage, airlines and airports to consider opportunities to go beyond