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Norwegian crew support well-being of frontline UK hospital staff during COVID-19 outbreak

Airline Crew from across the industry have come together to form Project Wingman to support the well-being of frontline NHS staff during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Project Wingman was launched in the UK on Friday 3rd April at the Whittington Hospital in North London. In just under a week, the project has now branched out to North Middlesex, Basildon, Southend and Mid-Essex, and potentially to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone,

Worthing, Frimley Park and York in the coming days.

The project creates the atmosphere of a small airline lounge for doctors, nurses and Allied Health Professionals providing them with refreshments, a chance to unwind, decompress and unload or simply have a conversation with a fellow professional who is used to the pressures of working in a stressful environment. There are currently over 1200 volunteer crew from different UK airlines - including Norwegian, easyJet, British Airways, Virgin Atlantic, TUI, Flybe, Jet2 and Loganair - on hand to help NHS staff during and after their shifts throughout the day.

“We want to look after the wellbeing of all of all frontline NHS staff” says Professor Rob Bor, Consultant Clinical psychologist: “we immediately thought of airline staff and reached out to them to support us. Many airline crews have been grounded by the global effects of Covid-19 and we recognised that this represents a rich resource of a uniformed and disciplined workforce, used to problem-solving and providing care. ”We called on Captain Dave Fielding of British Airways and Captain Emma Henderson of easyJet, and between them, they have sent out a “call to arms” to all aircrew across every airline regardless of brand.”

Billal Draifi, Norwegian Long Haul Cabin Crew, is an integral part of the recruitment team for Project Wingman and is in charge of the training and induction of new crew volunteers: “Frontline NHS staff are doing an incredible job under immense pressure and we are doing everything that we can to support and help them throughout this unprecedented situation. Throughout the day my colleagues and I are proud to wear our Norwegian uniforms and to be joined by other airline colleagues from across the industry as part of Project Wingman.”

Volunteer airline crew do not work directly with patients, they support staff in a number of practical ways so they can do their job effectively by using their unique skills in problem solving and calming techniques learned from their training for managing stressful and pressurised situations. Above all they will be offering a listening ear, comfort and kindness when staff need it most.

Project Wingman is in the process of expanding and offering similar services to hospital staff in the US, New Zealand, Japan and Australia.

For more information or for aircrew to volunteer please visit

Norwegian in the UK and Ireland:

- Norwegian carries almost **6 million UK passengers each year** from London Gatwick, Edinburgh and Manchester Airports to **30 destinations worldwide**
- Norwegian is the **third largest airline at London Gatwick**, with 4.6 million yearly passengers, and over 1,200 UK-based pilots and cabin crew
- In 2014, Norwegian introduced the **UK's first low-cost, long haul flights to the U.S.** - the airline now flies to 11 U.S destinations, Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro from London Gatwick
- Norwegian is the only airline to offer **free inflight WiFi** on UK flights to more than 30 European destinations and 13 long-haul destinations.
- The airline has one of the **youngest aircraft fleets in the world**, including next-generation Boeing 787 Dreamliner, Boeing 737 MAX and Boeing 737-800s
- Norwegian has been **voted 'Europe's best low-cost carrier' by passengers** for six consecutive years at SkyTrax World Airline Awards from 2013-2018, along with being awarded the **'World's best low-cost long-haul airline'** in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019
- Norwegian Reward is the airline's free to join **award-winning loyalty programme** offering members CashPoints and Rewards that reduce the cost of Norwegian flights

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