



Source: Evening Standard (London) {Main}
Edition:
Country: UK
Date: Tuesday 12, April 2022
Page: 22
Area: 149 sq. cm
Circulation: ABC 494364 Daily
Ad data: page rate £57,120.00, scc rate £240.00
Phone: 020 7938 7161
Keyword: Easyjet



EasyJet losses set to be trimmed as travel roars back

AVIATION

Rhiannon Curry

A STRONG resurgence in travel means losses at easyJet are set to be lower than the City expected, as the airline gears up to return to pre-pandemic passenger numbers this summer.

The company said today it has seen a healthy recovery in trading since the relaxation of Covid travel restrictions in January, reflecting the pent-up demand for travel from consumers.

It expects to report a loss of between £535 million to £565 million for the six months to the end of March, less than the £701 million for the same period in 2021.

While it only operated at 67% of pre-pandemic capacity during the first three months of the year, it said it expects operations over the summer months to match 2019 levels.

The airline was forced to make several flight cancellations over the weekend due to an unusually high number of staff off work due to Covid.

EasyJet CEO Johan Lundgren said around 5% of its planned flights were scrapped after twice the number of people called in sick as normal.

“Customers were notified and more than 60% of people were able to rebook for another flight on that day,” he added.

He is confident about continued momentum in the travel sector, with beach destinations proving particularly popular with holidaymakers. EasyJet has added five new slots in Greece this year, making it the largest carrier to the main Greek islands.

Lundgren expects EasyJet to emerge as “one of the winners in the recovery”.

Analysts were more circumspect, pointing out that higher fuel prices and ongoing disruption caused by the pandemic would lean on performance.

EasyJet said it had bought 64% of the fuel needed for the second half of the year at \$571 per metric tonne, reducing its exposure to current fuel price rises.

Allegra Dawes, senior airlines analyst at Third Bridge, said that while the update “points to the market’s continued recovery, easyJet faces rising costs and continued operational difficulties.

“The road to a full recovery remains long and bumpy.”

Shares in the company opened almost 2% lower today, at 532p.

@RhiannonCurry_

