From the Chair

19 December 2017

Michael O’Leary
CEO, Ryanair

Dear Mr O’Leary

Ryanair cabin crew pay and conditions

Our Committees have a close interest in improving the quality of work in the UK’s economy. We are, therefore, greatly concerned by media reports that have emerged over the weekend relating to Ryanair cabin crew pay and working conditions, including for new recruits trained by Crewlink.

National Minimum Wage

The media report suggested agency cabin crew receive a “premium” hourly rate of £14.43, plus commission of 10 per cent of in-flight sales. But, according to a Crewlink trainer, “the hourly rate would apply only to ‘flight time’, from when a plane leaves the blocks till it is parked at its destination”.

Please will you confirm:

1. What proportion and number of Ryanair cabin crew are agency staff, and what proportion are direct recruits;
2. Whether agency and directly employed cabin crew are contractually obligated to take unpaid leave during quiet periods in the year.
3. Whether flight time is paid for all hours on shift;
   a. If flight time is not paid for all hours, what work activities such as sales meetings, pre-flight briefings and turnaround time are paid?
   b. What payment is made for flight delays and cancellations?
4. What the hourly “flight time” rate is for:
   a. agency crew
   b. direct recruits.

The report also stated that recruits are paid £3.75 per hour for eight-hour airport standby or standby shifts. Ryanair argues this is lawful because flight time and commission pay bring the average rate of pay above the NMW.

5. What is the average hourly commission earned by Ryanair cabin crew?
6. Please provide details of auditing procedures in place to ensure:
   a. all staff are clearing NMW;
   b. all staff are paid for all hours worked.

Fees and charges

The report suggested agency cabin crew face costs of “at least” £2,150 for training and £25 per month for uniform in the first year. They are paid a £1,000 allowance as contribution to costs, but this can be claimed back if they leave.
7. How many hours of training are required for each member of cabin crew?
8. What is the average hourly wage of Ryanair staff after these costs are accounted for?
9. What procedures do you have in place to ensure that all staff clear NMW after all training costs are accounted for?

A 2017 contract seen by the reporter also suggested cabin crew would have a £175 “administration cost” taken from their salaries if they left in the first 15 months of employment. The report further suggested that some 30% of recruits have their contracts terminated within the first 12 months of employment, but are still required to pay back course fees and allowances.

Please would you provide:

10. An explanation of the rationale and legal basis for the £175 “administration cost”; 
11. The proportion of a) agency and b) direct recruits who have their contracts terminated within the first twelve months, and a breakdown of reasons for termination; and 
12. A statement of Ryanair’s policy on repayment of fees and allowances in the event of termination of contract.

We would be grateful if you would please respond by Monday 8 January.

Rt Hon Frank Field MP  
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee

Rachel Reeves MP  
Chair, Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee