Rt Hon Frank Field MP  
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee  
House of Commons  
14 Tothill Street  
London SW1H 9NB

Re: Ryanair Cabin Crew Pay and Conditions

Dear Mr Field,

Thank you for your letter dated 19 December. We are disappointed that your Committee would give credence to inaccurate content, false claims and sensationalist reportage published recently in certain sections of the UK print media.

We are happy to respond to, and correct, the false claims published in media reports earlier this week as follows:

1. Ryanair cabin crew earn between €24,000 to €40,000 p.a., which is more than double the UK national minimum wage (NMW). We are not as you reportedly claimed "squeezing" these well paid crew members. Their hours of work are limited by law, to less than 900 flight hours p.a. (an average of 18 hours per week) and less than 2,000 total duty hours (avg. of less than 41 total hours per week). We do not and cannot by law ask our crew to work "long hours".

2. A majority of our senior cabin crew (No.1's) are direct employees, whereas a majority of our junior cabin crew are agency staff.

3. Like many seasonal employers (especially in the tourism industry), Ryanair can require a small proportion of people to take unpaid leave during the quieter winter months. In 2017 this applied to less than 10% of our 8,000 cabin crew members, mainly at summer sun bases, and even in these cases, for an average of just 8 days.

4. Our direct recruits are paid a combination of basic pay, flight pay, and commission which results in an average pay of €24,000 to €40,000 p.a.

5. Cabin crew are paid a fee of £30 for an airport standby shift, although such airport standbys occur at a rate of less than 1 every 2 months (i.e. less than 6 per year). This fee is paid in addition to their avg. pay of between €24k and €40k, which is more than double UK NMW. There is no average hourly commission earned by cabin crew. Commission comes from inflight sales and is calculated on a monthly and annual basis. The average monthly sales commission is over €210, the average annual commission is over €2,600.

6. NMW auditing is not necessary since none of our cabin crew earn less than the UK NMW of £5.60 to £7.50 per hour. Our crews earn more than double the NMW.

7. A wide range of cabin crew training courses are available at a cost of between €2,400 to €3,000. These courses, like all professional qualifications, are provided by non Ryanair third party training organisations, and are paid for directly by the students. Ryanair only recruits qualified cabin crew.
8. Upon joining Ryanair, qualified cabin crew are provided with a full uniform without charge, and in their first 12 months of probation agree to pay £25 per month towards the cost of the uniform. This is to recover the cost of uniforms if they leave within the first 12 months of recruitment. On the first anniversary of joining Ryanair, they receive their first annual uniform allowance of £307.50 (which is then paid to them every year), which fully refunds the £300 uniform contributions they make in year 1, and any further uniform costs they may have in subsequent years. Ryanair crew do not pay for their uniforms, Ryanair does.

9. Generally cabin crew training courses last approx. 6 weeks.

10. As the average pay of Ryanair’s cabin crew ranges between €24,000 to €40,000 and they can, by law, fly no more than 900 hours, the average flying hourly pay of our cabin crew varies between €26.67 to €44.44 per hour.

11. The payment of education or training costs are not factored into cabin crew pay. Ryanair only recruits fully qualified cabin crew, in much the same way that the NHS only recruit fully qualified nurses and doctors. Some media reports have wrongly attempted to conflate the cost of this professional qualification against the income in the first year of work arising from the use of that professional cabin crew qualification.

12. The hearsay claims made by this reporter about cabin crew contracts are inaccurate. Many of them were made by a named former cabin crew member who lost his Border Force security clearance for repeated breaches of UK airport security rules.

13. The vast majority of Ryanair cabin crew recruits, both agency and directly employed, successfully complete their 12 month probationary period and continue to fly for Ryanair thereafter. Only a tiny minority (less than 5%) do not pass their probationary trial period. So the vast majority of cabin crew recruits successfully enter year 2 which means they receive the £307 annual uniform allowance and the many other benefits that arise from flying for Ryanair such as discounted travel, 5on/3off rosters (a bank holiday every weekend), great pay, promotions, and unmatched job security.

14. Finally, Ryanair does not require any repayment of fees or allowances in the event of a termination of contract. Some contract agencies may charge an agreed admin fee of €200 if a crew member resigns/leaves during their initial probation period.

We trust that your Committee, now that it is aware of the factual position in these matters - namely that Ryanair crew pay significantly exceeds (by more than double) UK NMW - will disregard the many false claims made in these sensationalized and inaccurate media reports.

Yours sincerely,

Darrell Hughes
Director of HR Strategy & Operations

Cc: Rachel Reeves MP Chair Business Committee
Baroness Sugg Aviation Minister – Department for Transport