

EasyJet raises £419m via share placement

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British low-cost airline EasyJet, blighted by the coronavirus fallout, said Thursday it has raised £419 million (\$523 million, 463 million euros) via a share placing as it tries to cope with disappearing demand for air travel.

One day after posting widening losses, the carrier said in a statement that it has placed more than 59.5 million shares, or almost 15 percent of its stock, at 703 pence per share.

EasyJet announced the placing on Wednesday to bolster its finances, as it also revealed that losses deepened in the first half as virus-related cancellations began to hit operations.

The airline, which is based in Luton north of London, posted a [net loss](#) of £324 million in the six months to the end of March, just as lockdowns were imposed across much of Europe.

The group had already decided last month that it would axe up to 4,500 jobs, or almost a third of its staff, due to the dramatic slump in demand that is expected to persist despite easing [travel restrictions](#).

The carrier follows rivals British Airways, Ryanair and Virgin Atlantic and others in slashing thousands of jobs to save costs as the bulk of planes remain grounded despite the relaxation of government lockdowns worldwide.

Separately on Thursday, Australia's Qantas announced plans to slash 6,000 staff and ground 100 planes for up to a year in a US\$10 billion cost-cutting blitz in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

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