

Pilots



- 1 **(CNN)** – Their combined ages are just 45. But that didn't stop 26-year-old captain Kate McWilliams and her 19-year-old co-pilot Luke Elsworth from flying hundreds of passengers to their destinations this week. The young pilots manned a flight from London to Malta, after Kate earlier passed a course ascending to the rank of captain. Their employer, the British carrier Easyjet, believes Kate has become the world's youngest commercial airline captain – with co-pilot Luke also one of the country's youngest co-pilots.
- 2 At an early age, Kate began a CTC Aviation training course, and two years later started working as a first officer with British airline carrier Easyjet. The first officer is often referred to as the co-pilot of an aircraft, and is in effect the second-in-command to the captain. Julie Westhorp of the British Women Pilots' Association (BWPA) said she hoped Kate's achievement "will inspire more women to consider pursuing a career in aviation. It clearly demonstrates to other young women that it is possible to succeed as a pilot in commercial aviation," she added.
- 3 Of the 130,000 airline pilots worldwide, just 450 are female captains according to the International Society of Women Airline Pilots, and Kate has urged more women to join their ranks. "I joined the air cadets when I was 13 where I got plenty of flying experience," said Kate, who first became interested in planes after attending an air show at age 4. "I didn't imagine a career in commercial aviation as I didn't know any commercial pilots who I could ask for advice," added Kate, who is based at London's Gatwick Airport. "I never even thought it could be an option available to me."

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