

Evolution of Pilot Peer Support in Modern Airlines

The Role of the Pilot Advisory Group (PAG)

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1970s – The Origins of the PAG



Alcohol misuse
recognized in
aviation



Mental health was
often stigmatized
or overlooked.



Aer Lingus pilots
began informal
support groups



Support systems
were informal,
relying on
camaraderie
among pilots.



Foundation based
on trust and
confidentiality



EASA – A Turning Point for PAG

Feb 2021: EASA mandates Peer Support Programs (PSPs)

Aer Lingus modernizes PAG through formal Peer training and promotion etc.

PAG now supported by CAP (Centre for Aviation Psychology)

Supported by Aer Lingus & Irish ALPA, but completely independent of both.



The PAG Today

An initial point of reference for pilots with personal concerns about their own wellbeing or concern for a colleague

Confidential peer support for pilots, by pilots

Trusted and confidential pathways to professional help and support

Peers and PAG users, now supported by MHP along with backup of CAP

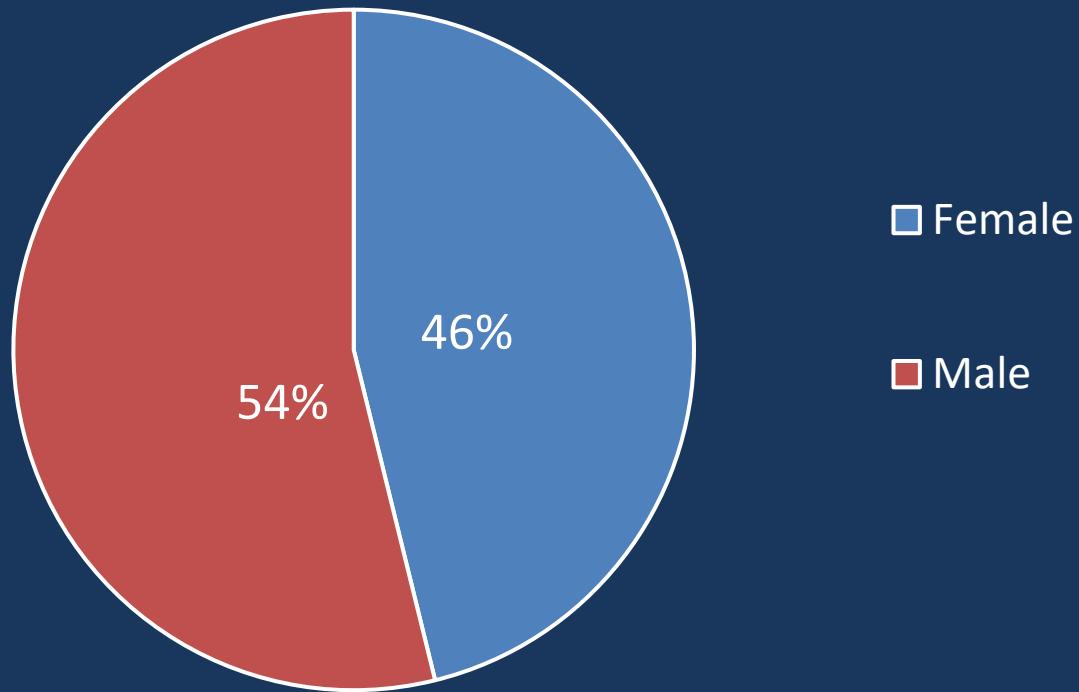
Peer availability across gender, rank and fleet reflecting our diversity

Formation of a Steering Group, equal stakeholders from the Company, the union, the PAG and CAP

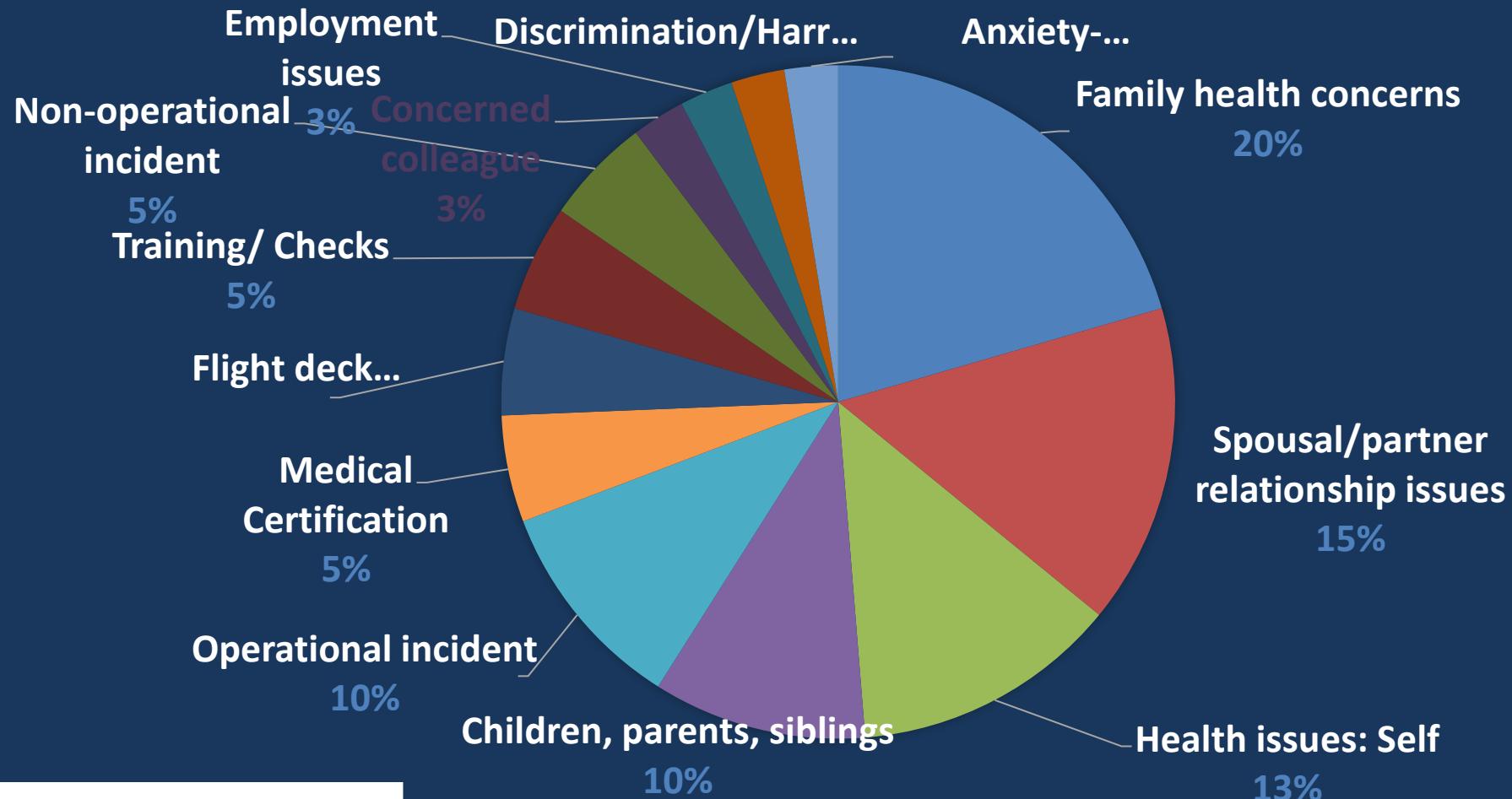


Who is using the PAG?

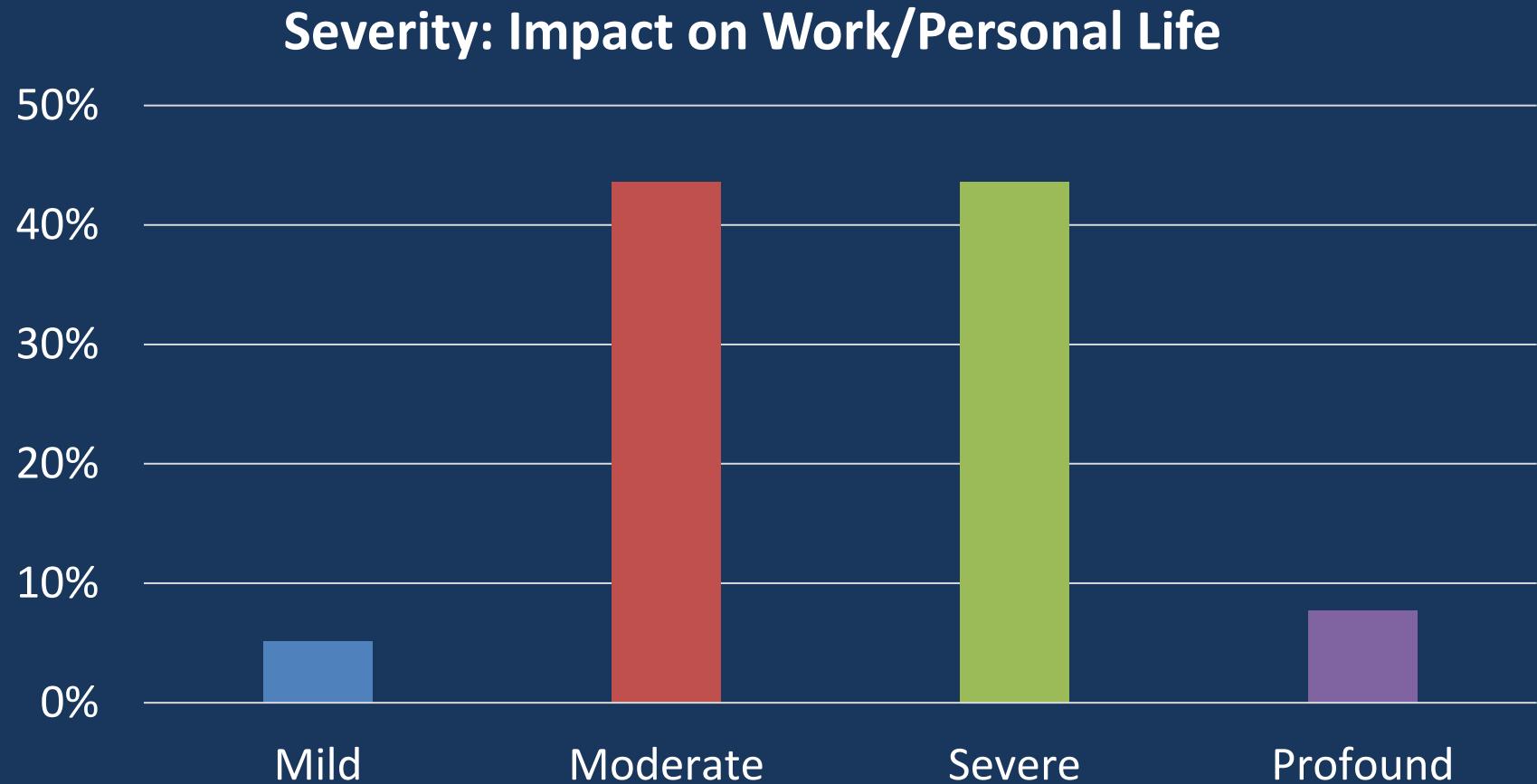
Gender



Why do Aer Lingus pilots use The PAG?



How severe are the issues?

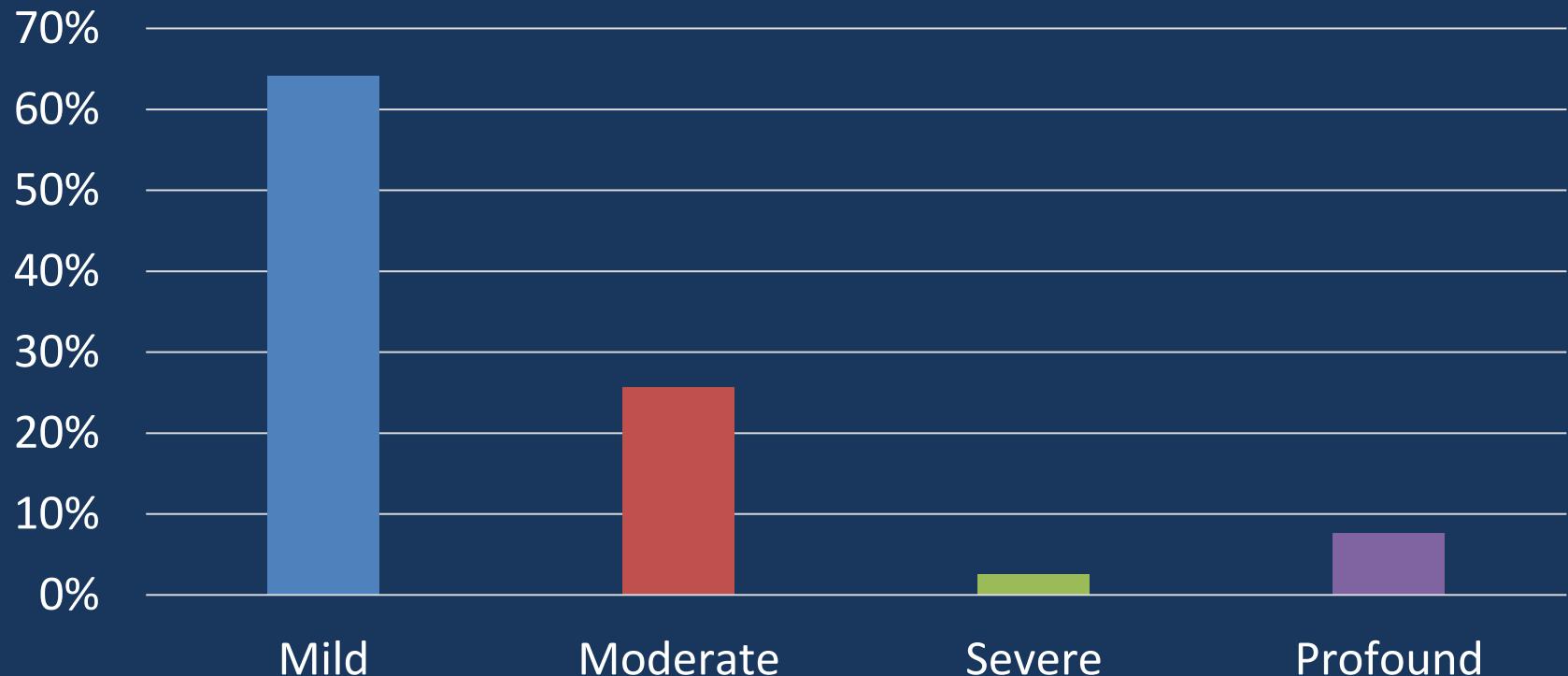


Start of Case



How severe are the issues?

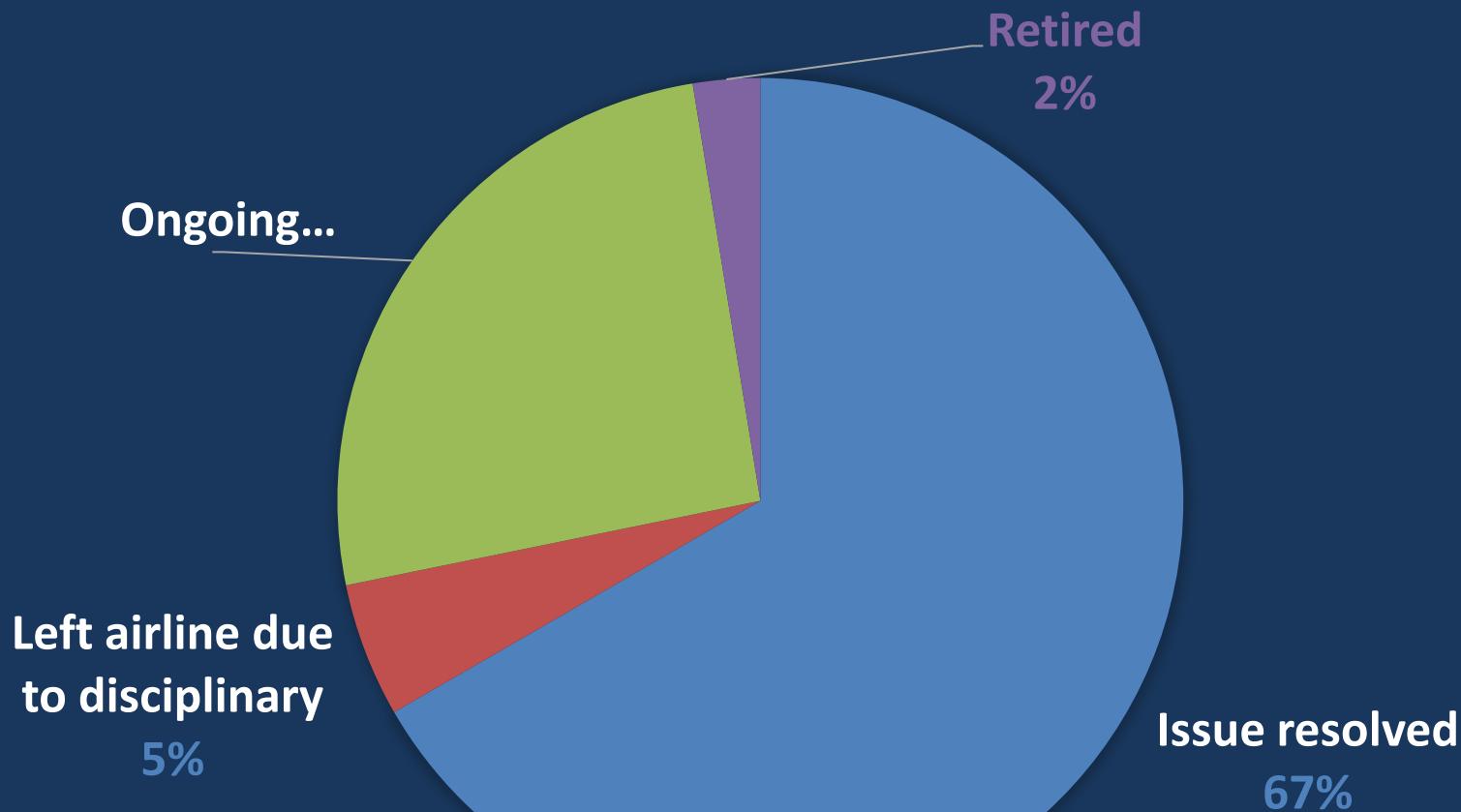
Severity: Impact on Work/Personal Life



End of Case



Outcome?



Structure of PAG



Pilot Peers: trained Aer Lingus pilots, selected by existing Peers



Mental Health Professional guidance



Independent of, but supported by Aer Lingus and IALPA



The Role of a Pilot Peer



Trained in active listening, managing difficult conversations and signposting



Understands the airline environment



Maintains strict confidentiality



Support Pathways



Informal peer
conversation



Signposting to
internal support



Referral to external
professionals



Ongoing follow-up



Looking Forward



ONGOING PEER
TRAINING



- RAISING AWARENESS



CONTINUOUS
COLLABORATION WITH
MHPS



ADAPTING TO PILOT
NEEDS



USE OF TECHNOLOGY



Summary

PAG = confidential, trusted peer support

Rooted in decades of pilot-led care

Aligned with EASA and now supported by CAP

Enhances safety through ensuring support of mental wellness



Final Thought

‘We don’t have to do all of it alone. We were never meant to.’

— Dr Brené Brown

Professor, University of Houston

