

# EasyJet to use unmanned drones to inspect its aircraft

Drones will assess airline's fleet of Airbus planes, reporting back to engineers on any damage that may require maintenance work

Wednesday 7 May 2014 12.41 BST



The drones will be programmed to assess the carrier's fleet of Airbus A319 and A320 planes. Photograph: Alexander Klein/AFP/Getty Images

[EasyJet](#) is to use unmanned flying [drones](#) to inspect its fleet of Airbus aircraft.

The airline hopes to introduce the drones as early as next year following trials in the next few months.

They will be programmed to assess the carrier's fleet of Airbus A319 and A320 planes, reporting back to engineers on any damage that may require further inspection or maintenance work.

EasyJet is working with the Coptercraft and Measurement Solutions companies as well as Bristol Robotics Laboratory on modifying existing technology so it can bring in the drones.

EasyJet's engineering head, Ian Davies, said: "Drone technology could be used extremely effectively to help us perform aircraft checks. Checks that would usually take more than a day could be performed in a couple of hours and potentially with greater accuracy."

Arthur Richards, head of aerial robotics at the Bristol Robotics Laboratory, a partnership between the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England, said: "Aircraft inspection is a great application for drones. Coupled with smart navigation and computer

vision, they can get accurate data from really awkward places. We look forward to working with easyJet to develop safe, effective and efficient drone systems for this challenge."

EasyJet also announced on Wednesday that it was looking at deploying new technology to enable a remote engineering team to see exactly what a pilot or engineer is seeing using virtual reality glasses.

The glasses use the world's first high definition see-through display system, providing augmented reality to help easyJet remotely diagnose a technical issue.

This technology will be especially useful in some of the airline's more remote airports across its network. The airline currently flies to 138 airports, including as far away as Sharm el Sheikh in Egypt and Tel Aviv in Israel.

In addition, the carrier is bringing in special apps designed to aid engineers and pilots in key tasks and is also making its flights paperless.

EasyJet's chief executive, Carolyn McCall, said: "We have examined and assessed cutting-edge technology across many different industries and are now applying a range of new technologies to the aviation sector for the first time to help us run our fleet of aircraft more effectively, efficiently and safely."