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Soaring numbers of wealthy flyers switch to private jets over fear of catching Covid from other passengers on commercial flights and in airport queues

Wealthy flyers have been switching to private jets to avoid catching coronavirus from other passengers on commercial flights.

Private jet operators and brokers reported an influx of business from customers hoping to book a flight with them for the first time amid the pandemic.

Passengers pay a premium for an experience that allows them to drive straight onto the tarmac to catch a flight - rather than mingling with potential Covid-19 carriers inside the airport, reported the Financial Times.

The number of commercial flights between September 1 and October 15 was halved this year because of Coronavirus travel restrictions, but the number of private flights only fell by 10 per cent in that period, according to aviation consultancy WingX.

And in August there were more private flights than the same month last year.

The CEO of UK-based private jet travel provider, told MailOnline some 44 per cent of their flights were first-time customers.

He said 20 per cent of customers this year were children - compared to 14 per cent last year - as families chose to fly private to keep themselves safe.

'Increased interest in private jet travel took off earlier this year, with enquiry levels double our usual volumes and flight bookings ahead of last year during the summer peak,' he added.

'Currently we remain ahead of last year in terms of flight sales. Of course, demand over the next few months is hard to predict as business travel likely to be much lower for some time.'

'But for people who need to travel, our industry remains very attractive, so we're cautiously optimistic.'

'A number of our existing clients are also choosing to fly privately more often going forwards, so we recently launched our new Jet Card program which guarantees availability and a fixed hourly rate for frequent flyers in Europe.'

A short haul on-demand private charter flight in Europe can cost from €4,500 (£4,010), according to **LunaJets'** website.