NEWS

Sixty seconds on . . . nightingales

Abi Rimmer

The BMJ

Not the lark?

Ha, very clever, but this is no time to quote Shakespeare.

So, the nurse then?

No, we're not talking about the Lady with the Lamp either. We're talking about hospitals that are opening for patients with coronavirus.

New hospitals?

Well, three temporary hospitals. The first Nightingale Hospital announced will be based at the ExCeL conference centre in London,¹ a venue previously famous for hosting the Discover Dogs event.

And the other two?

One will be based at the Manchester Central Convention Complex,² which was to hold the UK's largest gin festival, and the other will be based at the NEC in Birmingham, which recently hosted Crufts

Oh . . .

Don't worry, I'm sure they'll clean up the dog hair. Initially all three hospitals will provide up to 500 beds but have capacity to expand, with the London centre able to hold several thousand beds if required.

Like field hospitals?

Exactly. In fact, military planners and engineers have been involved in their development. Also, some military medics will be on hand to care for patients at the Nightingale hospitals alongside NHS colleagues from across the health service.

Is anyone else helping out?

St John Ambulance are supplying hundreds of volunteers to help staff at the first Nightingale hospital in London.

And . . . ?

Yes, you may have heard that the NHS has also enlisted the help of easyJet and Virgin Atlantic cabin crew.³ NHS England said that many airline staff were first aid trained as well as being security cleared. Those who volunteer will get training and play a support role—changing beds and performing other non-clinical tasks.

Cabin crew, doors cleared to open.

- 1 NHS England. News: new nightingale hospital to fight coronavirus. 24 March 2020. www.england.nhs.uk/2020/03/new-nhs-nightingale-hospital-to-fight-coronavirus.
- 2 NHS England. News: NHS to open two more hospitals to fight coronavirus. 27 March 2020. www.england.nhs.uk/2020/03/nhs-to-open-two-more-new-hospitals-to-fight-coronavirus.
- 3 NHS England. Airline cabin crew to join NHS nightingale crew. 30 March 2020. www.england.nhs.uk/2020/03/airline-cabin-crew-to-join-nhs-nightingale-carers.

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