



Buying secondary tickets for concerts and events

About this factsheet

This factsheet provides advice and information about buying tickets for major concerts and events. It tells you what your rights are in law, what to watch out for and how to avoid becoming a victim of ticket fraud.

Background

Many of us will have read or heard about tickets for major concerts and events selling out in record time. This can lead to disappointment amongst consumers.

Inevitably, tickets for these 'sold-out' events become available via online auctions sites such as eBay, and through secondary ticket agents and fan-to-fan ticket exchanges – often at an inflated cost.

What the law says

If you buy the ticket online, it is illegal for the seller to give you misleading information about the ticket, or to miss out vital information (such as the seats having a restricted view of the stage). You should be given all the information you need to make an informed choice before you buy.

If you buy from a secondary ticketing agency e.g. Stubhub, Viagogo, eBay, Seatwave and Get Me In, new laws that came into force in 2015 mean the seller must provide certain information to the buyer. This includes clear and full information about:

- timings, locations, seat numbers/standing areas;
- the original 'face-value' cost of the ticket;
- the full cost of the ticket now, including booking fees, surcharges or non-optional charges such as postage;
- any restrictions for the ticket(s) e.g. age limits, restricted sight-lines;
- any specific terms and conditions e.g. how a named ticket can be transferred to someone else; and
- a contact email must be provided should any problems arise.

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If you haven't bought from the ticket seller before, check online for previous customer feedback to see if other consumers were happy with their experience. It may also be worth checking if the ticket seller belongs to the Society of Ticket Agents and Retailers (STAR) as members must follow a code of conduct. This will help resolve any problems that may arise.

Warning: Don't be tempted to buy from someone on the street or near the venue – if the tickets aren't genuine you'll have lost your money and it's unlikely you'll be able to track the seller down.

How to pay

When making a purchase, consider using a credit card if the ticket costs £100 or over as this gives you added protection known as equal or joint liability. By law, the credit card company must help get your money back if a problem arises with your purchase. This law only applies to the purchase of a single item and will not work if you've bought, for example, two tickets costing £50.00.

If you're buying a number of tickets, or the ticket value is less than £100, you can use the credit or debit card provider's Chargeback process to claim money back. This is a voluntary process that card providers sign-up to rather than a legal requirement so check the terms and conditions of your card provider's Chargeback agreement.

If things go wrong

If you suspect a ticket you have bought is not genuine, check with the concert promoter to avoid turning up to the event and being disappointed.

You have fewer rights when buying tickets from a secondary ticket seller, however, many specialist secondary ticket sites provide consumer protection guarantees if tickets fail to arrive or you notice a problem. Check what the guarantees promise before you buy.

If you think you have been a victim of ticket fraud, report it to Consumerline, managed by Trading Standards Service on 0300 123 6262 or visit

www.nidirect.gov.uk/consumerline

