

CMA calls for stronger laws to tackle illegal ticket resale

Press release

Sales of tickets on platforms such as viagogo and StubHub should be subject to tighter rules, the CMA has today proposed.



Image credit: nd3000 via istock

As live events such as music festivals and large sporting events resume over the coming months, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has set out several recommended changes to the law and existing system of regulation, which are intended to protect consumers.

The recommendations include:

- a ban on platforms allowing resellers to sell more tickets for an event than they can legally buy from the primary market;
- ensuring platforms are fully responsible for incorrect information about tickets that are listed for sale on their websites;
- a new system of licensing for platforms that sell secondary tickets that would enable an authority to act quickly and issue sanctions such as taking down websites, withdrawing a business's right to operate in the sector, and the imposition of substantial fines.

Whilst the bulk-buying of tickets ahead of real fans by professional resellers – who then sell them at inflated prices – may be illegal, swift and effective action by authorities is not possible under the current law. Similar issues arise in relation to laws which prevent resellers advertising tickets using incorrect information, or 'speculatively selling' tickets that they don't own.

Over recent years the CMA has taken strong action against secondary ticketing websites to tackle non-compliance in the sector, including the failure to provide important and accurate information to consumers. This has included

requiring viagogo and StubHub to remove misleading messaging about ticket availability and to tell customers where the tickets they buy might lead to them being turned away at the door.

George Lusty, Senior Director for Consumer Protection at the CMA, said:

“Over recent years we have taken strong action to protect people buying tickets from resellers online, and the secondary ticket websites are now worlds apart from those we saw before the CMA took action.

“While it is clear that concerns about the sector remain, there are limits to what the CMA and other enforcers can do with their current powers. With live music and sporting events starting back up we want the Government to take action to strengthen the current laws and introduce a licensing regime for secondary ticketing platforms.

“If adopted, these proposals will help prevent people getting ripped off by unscrupulous resellers online and we stand ready to help the Government to implement them.”

You can read the full report, including further details on the proposals, on the CMA’s [website](#).

Notes to editors:

- All media enquiries should be directed to the CMA press office by email on press@cma.gov.uk, or by phone on 020 3738 6460.
- For further details regarding the CMA’s enforcement action in the secondary ticketing sector, please see [here](#).
- Based on data provided from all the main secondary platform operators in the UK, the CMA’s investigation into the acquisition of Stubhub by viagogo estimated the value of the tickets sold in 2019 through secondary ticketing websites was approximately £350 million.

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