

# News story: Independent Venue Week joins UK Government in fight against ticket rogues

Music venues across the nation are hosting a number of gigs which will give fans the opportunity to see, and maybe meet, their favourite artists and discover new musicians at affordable prices.

The majority of venues taking part in the week-long celebration are selling tickets through reputable online companies and for any resales, through sites that encourage fan-to-fan resale so tickets are sold on at the original value or lower.

Statistics from UK Music estimate that:

- nearly 300,000 people enjoyed Northern Ireland's vibrant music scene in 2016 and the sector contributes more than £88 million to the local economy
- over 2.5 million people enjoyed Scotland's vibrant music scene in 2017 and the sector contributes more than £111 million to the local economy
- over 1.1 million people enjoyed Wales' vibrant music scene in 2017 and the sector contributes more than £60 million to the local economy

This follows work by UK Government to strengthen the existing ticketing information requirement in the Consumer Rights Act 2015, and introduce a new criminal offence of using automated software to buy more tickets online than that allowed.

Minister for the Creative Industries, Margot James, said:

Northern Ireland has produced great music talent including Van Morrison and Snow Patrol – and for its music scene to continue to thrive, it's vital that fans are able to see their favourite acts at fair prices.

Scotland boasts a rich musical heritage, it is the birthplace of KT Tunstall, Calvin Harris and Annie Lennox.

Known to many as the 'land of song', Wales is rightly renowned worldwide for its musical heritage and iconic performers, including Tom Jones and the Manic Street Preachers. It is great to see initiatives like Independent Venue Week helping to promote the next generation of Welsh musicians while championing ethical ticket companies.

I'm pleased that Independent Venue Week is supporting the UK Government's work to stop fans being ripped off. We have already introduced a new criminal offence to ban the use of automated

software that buys up lots of tickets and sells them on at inflated prices.

By working with the music industry, together we can ensure that thousands of people who enjoy gigs right across the nation are protected from ticket touts.

Founder of Independent Venue Week, Sybil Bell, said:

The wonderful thing about seeing an artist in a smaller venue is you get to enjoy the feeling of discovering a brilliant new artist at the same time as supporting a local business.

Ticket prices are more affordable than the bigger shows bands play when they have grown which means the small venues are accessible to more people. Gig goers who support these venues help them keep these cultural hubs alive and give artists the platform they need to learn their craft.

The Competition and Markets Authority is taking enforcement action against secondary ticketing websites suspected of breaking consumer law, whilst the Advertising Standards Authority has acted to clamp down on misleading prices and charges on secondary ticketing websites.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

Independent Venue Week is a great way to showcase Scotland's vibrant live music scene while protecting gig-goers from being ripped off by ticket touts.

Scotland's economy receives a huge boost from locals and tourists alike packing out small venues to listen to a diverse range of artists.

I want more people to be able to enjoy Scotland's music scene at a fair price. Initiatives like Independent Venue Week and the UK Government's crackdown on touts will hit the right note with music lovers across the nation.

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UK Government Minister for Wales Nigel Adams said:

Wales has a diverse music scene which is enriched by artists performing both in Welsh and English across a whole spectrum of

genres.

Independent Venue Week will give fans a flavour of exciting new talent whilst promoting ethical ticketing practice meaning that artists, venues and fans all benefit.

The [Competition and Markets Authority](#) is taking enforcement action against secondary ticketing websites suspected of breaking consumer law, whilst the [Advertising Standards Authority](#) has acted to clamp down on misleading prices and charges on secondary ticketing websites.

## **Notes to editors**

[Further information on Independent Venue Week.](#)

**Further Information on gigs taking place in [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#).**

Watch a [clip](#) of Independent Venue Week's documentary which explores the world of independent music venues.

UK Government has strengthened the existing ticketing information requirement in the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and have introduced a new criminal offence of using automated software to buy more tickets online than that allowed.

We support the work of enforcement agencies in this area, such as the Competition and Markets Authority, National Trading Standards, and the advertising industry's own regulator the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).

We also welcome the increasing adoption by industry of technological solutions such as blockchain and mobile 'ticket-less tickets', and agree with Professor Waterson in his latest report that this is likely to bring about the greatest change in the ticketing market in the future, with the potential to significantly restrict the ability of touts to distort the market.