

Press release: Crackdown on touts using robots to rip off real fans

A new law to ban ticket touts from using 'bots' to dodge security measures and snap up more tickets than allowed by event organisers will this week be laid in Parliament, paving the way for the measures to come into force.

The new offence will mean touts using automated software to bulk buy tickets for resale on secondary ticketing sites at hugely inflated prices will face an unlimited fine.

London musical Hamilton saw tickets being advertised on the secondary ticketing market for up to £6,000. While artists including Adele and Ed Sheeran have also been targeted by professional touts. The Government's work places the UK at the forefront of the fight against touts exploiting real fans.

Margot James, minister for digital and the creative industries, said:

I'm determined to make sure everyone has the chance to see their favourite stars at a fair price.

This week we will reach the final stage in our fight to beat rip-off ticket touts using bots to buy huge numbers of tickets only to sell them on at massively over-inflated prices.

Our work, together with improvements by industry, will give consumers greater protection, make the market more transparent and help Britain's live events scene continue to thrive.

Consumer Minister Andrew Griffiths said:

Fans have a right to know exactly what they're signing up to on ticket resale websites, but all too often people are left feeling ripped off when the ticket doesn't match expectations.

We're taking steps to crack down on touts using "bots" to bulk buy tickets for resale and last week's new rules will also improve transparency in this market.

Adam Webb, campaign manager FanFair Alliance, said:

This new legislation is important, and we need it to be activated and enforced. By reducing the means of dedicated touts to bulk harvest tickets, Government can help recalibrate the live music market and give fans a better opportunity to buy tickets at a price the artist sets.

Michael Dugher, UK Music chief executive, said:

I'm delighted the Government has listened to calls from UK Music and industry campaigners like the FanFair Alliance to ban bots.

This new law is an important step to ensure transparency in the resale ticket market. We need the law to be fully enforced to protect music fans from being ripped off. We also need much stronger action from Google which is still directing fans to sites like Viagogo at the top of an online search, rather than to official ticketing.

Music fans have been fleeced for far too long and we will continue to work with Government to ensure our fantastic live music industry continues to bring enjoyment to millions of people and to make over a £1 billion annual contribution to the UK economy.

The new legislation, being brought forward thanks to a provision in the [Digital Economy Act](#), is part of a wider government drive to make sure genuine fans are not losing out through the secondary ticketing market.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy introduced new rules requiring ticket resellers to provide more information around resold event tickets. Resellers now have to supply any unique ticket numbers (UTN) to the buyer to identify a ticket's seat, standing area or location.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is taking enforcement action against secondary ticketing websites suspected of breaking consumer law, Trading Standards has been conducting raids across the UK to pursue those suspected of potential breaches of the Unfair Trading Regulations, and the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is clamping down on misleading prices and charges on secondary ticketing websites.

New [guidance](#) was also published last month to help prepare business for these changes and provide clarity to make sure they comply while also securing a better deal for consumers.

[Citizens Advice](#) provide information for consumers about buying event tickets and how to make sure a ticketing site is genuine.

Government work is being bolstered by new approaches in the private sector:

- UK startup [Aventus](#) and Dutch startup [Guaranteed Unique Ticketing System](#) use blockchain technology to make it impossible to resell tickets at a higher

price.

- British firm [DICE](#) is using innovative mobile technology to lock tickets to user accounts and beat the touts.
- Big UK music stars such as Adele and Ed Sheeran have partnered with sites such as [Twickets.co.uk](#), which prohibits the resale of tickets at a profit.

Notes to editors

Citizens Advice consumer helpline: 0345 404 0506

For more information please contact the DCMS press office on 020 7 211 2210