

Update on secondary tickets – 14 March

The government's 13 March response to Professor Waterson's independent review of the secondary tickets sector has highlighted the CMA's contribution to addressing various issues identified in Professor Waterson's report.

CMA enforcement

In its response to Professor Waterson, the government has highlighted the consumer enforcement investigation that the CMA launched into suspected breaches of consumer protection law in the online secondary tickets market in December 2016.

The investigation is primarily focused on the following issues which it identified during its compliance review: whether information is provided on who the seller is and any connections the seller may have with secondary ticket websites or event organisers; whether information is given about any restrictions on the use of resold tickets which could result in a person being denied access to an event; and whether information about where a seat is located in the venue is provided.

Over the coming months the CMA will continue to use its formal powers to gather and assess evidence about the suspected breaches. If, after it has gathered and assessed the evidence, the CMA considers that the law has been breached, it will take the necessary action to secure compliance. It will update its website at key points during the investigation.

The CMA will also continue to review information about other issues that are brought to its attention, which might breach consumer protection law.

The CMA welcomes the government's commitment to make funding available to National Trading Standards (NTS) which will enable it to pursue enforcement work in this sector as well. The CMA will continue to work closely with NTS – and where appropriate other enforcement partners – to maximise the combined impact on compliance in the market.

CMA unfair terms policy work

The government's statement has also highlighted the work that the CMA has taken forward with representatives of the live events industry on how unfair terms law applies to ticketing terms and conditions – in response to a recommendation from Professor Waterson.

The CMA has already held two sessions with representatives of the music and theatre industries to discuss how unfair terms law applies and plans to hold a similar session with sporting bodies shortly.

Once discussions with the industry are concluded, the CMA will decide whether further work is necessary in order to bring about greater clarity in the law.