



Department
for Culture
Media & Sport

ticketing mailbox <ticketing@culture.gov.uk>

Call for evidence relating to the secondary ticketing market

1 message

19 November 2015 at 18:00

To: ticketing@culture.gov.uk

Re: call for evidence relating to the secondary ticketing market

I would like to add my personal experience/account of the secondary market as support - I have attached a few examples to support this however these may not be significant (and since the problems associated with secondary ticketing are so widespread you will surely be able to find thousands of concrete/recent/acute examples easily)

Whilst I currently have only limited 'evidence' to offer this report, I have offered examples that are common but perhaps slightly rarer than the now-familiar secondary process. I have also attached my letter to local MP (Ian Mearns last year to support this issue) I didn't realise the call for evidence was so brief so have only limited evidence available but feel strongly that this issue can & must be resolved as currently the situation facing genuine music fans is ridiculous.

My experience is that of a music fan, but I also conduct audience research and have spoken to many music fans about this problem - the experience I found most frequently is:

- dedicated music fans rearranging personal and work commitments to book tickets as soon as they are available,
- often simultaneously trying to book online and over the phone
- sometimes asking friends/colleagues to help try too

(this potentially clogs lines but, for the individual fan, it is better to try to book through a number of routes to get a better chance of getting through)

- phone - generally find that phone lines are immediately engaged and if/when they do get through tickets are sold out.

- online - websites frequently 'go slow' or crash (prob due to demand but there's an element of suspicion of how effectively eg Ticketmaster primary site is under these circumstances - easy to feel suspicious when the process is so unfair/ridiculous)
- frequently after a period of processing (esp if site is slow) tickets are sold out and offer secondary market prices.

Please understand that this is the situation facing dedicated, organised fans who attempt to buy tickets THE MINUTE tickets are onsale - these fans often know their fanbase so understand how popular the band is/how likely the tickets are to sell out immediately.

Conversationally, many fans understand that industry needs some level of guarantee for attendance, but that there should be a less dubious system to both protect both fans and promoters/venues/industry from cancellation issues, for example some sort of waiting list system so that tickets can be transferred legitimately if someone needs to cancel.

Fans are not fooled by the system but feel that they have no alternative to paying inflated prices.

Example 1: 2014 Manic Street Preachers - Gigs & Tours

Please find attached a tweet (from my husbands account - Narbi Price) with a screengrab from Gigs & Tours site. This tweet was sent after we tried to buy tickets for the Manic Street Preachers (26th September 2014) On this occasion we DID manage to get through to buy the tickets, put them in the basket and entered payment details IMMEDIATELY however after entering card details as quickly as possible the (attached) message said that they had 'run out of stock whilst we were entering our payment details' So even after we had secured tickets and entered credit card details Gigs & Tours effectively resold/withdrew our purchased tickets. The tickets were then immediately available on resale sites for inflated prices (see the other tweets attached from other fans as support)

You'll see the time we took the image is 9.09 - that's a 9.00 launch, the time to find and book correct tickets on a slow running website, enter card details, get that message, look elsewhere to get tickets (details to follow), swear and shout a bit, then decide to take a screengrab to publicise the problem.

On that occasion, I managed to buy 1 single ticket to the gig through Ticketmaster - this was a standing event so no 'last seat on the row' situation, so I don't know if I miraculously got the last ticket available or if there were a number of 'single' tickets available to encourage people wanting 2+ tickets to buy secondary.

Having been stung so often in past, I refused to pay inflated prices on secondary market and travelled to Manchester gig from Newcastle alone, went to the gig alone, stayed in a hotel alone, and travelled back alone. For an industry fueled by socialisation and public culture this seemed a little odd, unfair and off-putting to

many fans.

Example 2: 2008 Nick Cave - Royal Albert Hall Tickets

On this occasion, tickets sold out through the official site quickly although I don't have any record of those details.

Secondary tickets were bought through Royal Albert Hall Tickets, via Ebay as these were not as inflated as alternatives (£37 each) As I did not receive the tickets when expected I searched online and found that many people had complained that they hadn't received theirs and that the company regularly 'oversold' tickets. Having received no response from the seller I lodged a formal complaint to Paypal who helped contact RHAT and resolve the issue - I did receive my tickets just in time for the gig but read many online comments from people who did not. I firmly believe I would not have received tickets if I didn't have the clout of Paypal to threaten trading with this seller, and that this worked just in time.

On other occasions I have refused to support this market so have not attended events - and on many occasions of course I simply could never afford the charges, regardless of principle. Please try to consider in your report who IS NOT attending events, not only who is.

Yours sincerely,

Nancy Isherwood

4 attachments



IMG_2505.PNG
362K



IMG_2506.PNG
174K



IMG_2507.PNG
103K

Put Fans First MP letter.docx
143K

1st March 2015

Ian Mearns

Gateshead,

Dear Mr Mearns,

PLEASE PUT FANS FIRST

As your constituent, I write to ask for you to support the proposals of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Ticket Abuse, co-chaired by Mike Weatherly MP (Conservative) and Sharon Hodgson MP (Labour), and the Lords amendments, to inject necessary transparency to the secondary ticketing market.

As a fan of live events I am regularly frustrated to see tickets for events I want to go to apparently sold out within minutes of going on sale, only for thousands of them to instantly appear on secondary sites – such as Viagogo, Seatwave, GetMeIn! and Stubhub – often at significant mark-ups. These sites are supposed to be about fans selling tickets they can no longer use to other fans, and if that's all it was there wouldn't be a problem – but what sport or music fan buys dozens of tickets for a gig only to decide within a few minutes that they can't go?

The Government's aim should be to increase transparency in the secondary market. It would mean that touts selling their tickets through major internet platforms will have to prominently disclose key facts to consumers, assisting the fans, the event providers and the police to ensure a fair ticketing process. If the secondary ticketing platforms have nothing to fear from transparency, they should have nothing to fear from this legislation. I would therefore be grateful if you would confirm your commitment to see fans protected when it comes back to the House of Commons.

You may recognise that this letter is part of a wider campaign to resolve this problem fairly, and therefore you might receive similar worded letters from other constituents. In addition to the previous words, I would like to stress that this is a very genuine concern and one I feel very strongly about. As a music fan and researcher I am very aware of how this problem affects individuals on a personal level - beyond political points and legislation, this issue affects fans whose loyalty to an artist and experience of & access to their work is increasingly unaffordable. It is not only a issue of fairness within the market, it is an issue of cultural access - live music is an important part of both a band's career and of a society's expression and reception of culture & ideas. It is ridiculous to accept that this should increasingly exclude swathes of potential and committed fans by sheer financial exploitation. On a practical basis, the process of buying tickets (or frequently 'a ticket' as I frequently can not justify or afford the cost of taking a friend) is farcical and feels incredibly manipulative and dishonourable. I have often refused to attend events as I don't want to encourage the sale of tickets though such a frustrating and dishonest market, however I feel that as an individual consumer (or rather then a non-consumer) such principles are wasted without the support of government.

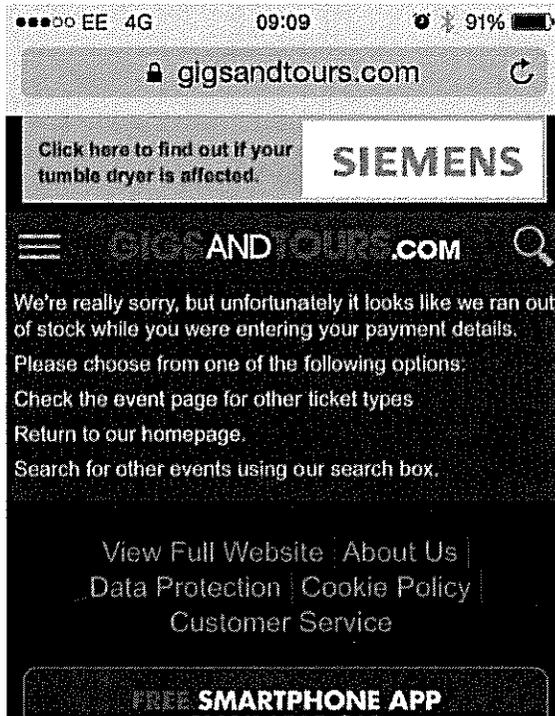
Yours sincerely,

◀ Back to Messages 13:10 twitter.com ▶

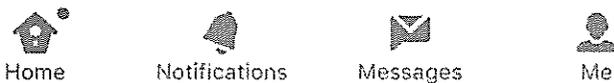
< Tweet 🔍 📧



How is this even possible?
@gigsandtours @Manics



Reply to gigsandtours, ManicStreetPreache



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13:11

twitter.com ▶



Tweet



ManicStreetPreachers @Mani... 26/09/2014

Dont know about dublin-yet- but looks like all the other gigs sold out in 20mins- AMAZING-thankyou all-xxxx



71

97



@Manics you might want to talk to your booking agents about

@TicketmasterUK holding tickets back for their touting arm, getmein. #tout #.

26/09/2014, 10:05

1 RETWEET



Reply

ManicStreetPreac



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twitter.com ▶



Tweet



Anybody wanna buy a Billy Connolly ticket for £1000? Need money to buy the Manics tickets that are being sold 10x face value

26/09/2014, 14:20

1 RETWEET



Reply to big red



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