



ticketing mailbox &lt;ticketing@culture.gov.uk&gt;

**Review of consumer protection measures applying to ticket resale: call for evidence**

1 message

20 November 2015 at 10:44

To: ticketing@culture.gov.uk

Dear Mr [redacted]

Please find attached a letter in response to the call for evidence.

Yours sincerely

Society of Ticket Agents and Retailers  
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**STAR - Response to Resale Review 18-11-15.pdf**

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**Department for Culture, Media and Sport  
100 Parliament Street  
LONDON  
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Dear

## **REVIEW OF CONSUMER PROTECTION MEASURES RELATING TO ONLINE SECONDARY TICKETING PLATFORMS**

I am pleased to offer the following in response to the recent call for evidence on behalf of the Society of Ticket Agents and Retailers (STAR).

STAR is the self-regulatory body for the entertainment ticket industry and our membership comprises all major ticket agents operating in the primary market in the UK as well as many venues and other supporting organisations.

A recent consultation with our membership focused on whether we should extend our remit to introduce self-regulation for reputable online marketplaces. An overwhelming number of members voted in favour of this development and the necessary work is now in progress with an aim to introduce the new Code in the first half of 2016.

We are pleased to be represented on the expert panel for Professor Waterson's independent review on behalf of the Government and look forward to contributing to that work as required.

### **SELF-REGULATION**

We consider that self-regulation of the market by establishing a Code of Practice, which requires both the highest standards of service and information and conformity with all current regulation and legislation, is the most effective and realistic means of providing customers with better information about how to avoid fraud. In addition, it ensures accountability both to consumers and the wider industry.

As this review indicates, there is a need for improvement in the sector and those that are able to subscribe to the STAR Code will inevitably be companies that seek such improvements and acknowledge that the resale market needs to operate legally, decently and to the benefit of consumers.

This year we have already seen a high level of deliberate fraud perpetrated by websites such as Circle Tickets and GetSporting.Com and we understand these two are the subjects of the highest numbers of reports of ticket fraud submitted to Action Fraud in the six months from May to October 2015. There needs to be a clear distinction for customers between resellers that actively seek to protect

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them, for instance through guarantees, and those that deliberately set out to defraud them or offer no such protection. The promotion of self-regulation and clear information for ticket buyers is therefore crucial.

### **BOTNETS**

The automated harvesting of tickets from the primary market so that those tickets can be resold on the secondary market is a considerable concern and STAR is vehemently opposed to this practice.

The use of botnets needs to be addressed, possibly with the need for new or additional legislation, to ensure the problems caused by botnets can be minimised. The development of reliable advice for primary ticket sellers to protect from botnet attacks should also be considered.

### **FAIR TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

At present there is a lack of clarity about whether it is fair for an event owner to stipulate a term prohibiting the resale of tickets. This needs to be resolved for the benefit of both consumers in terms of their rights and the industry in their operation of fair terms and conditions. We do not believe it would be fair to entirely restrict a customer's options for disposing of a ticket if unable to attend an event.

### **CONTROL OF RESALE**

The resale market has partly grown as a result of developments in technology. Similarly, the ability of event owners to control resale will most effectively rest with technological solutions that incorporate the sale and distribution of tickets as well as access control at the event. The employment of such solutions are the prerogative of the event owner or venue.

We hope that the comments above, and particularly our development of the new Code, are of help and relevance to the Review. We look forward to working with BIS and DCMS towards greater consumer protection and confidence in our world leading entertainment industry.

Yours sincerely

**Chief Executive**

