

TICKET FRAUD



With summer on the way, events and concerts are fully on the agenda. Whether it be sporting events such as the 2024 Olympics, the European Championships or headline concerts such as the eagerly anticipated Taylor Swift Eras Tour, demand for event tickets remains sky high. This demand, alongside limited availability creates prime opportunities for fraudsters to fully exploit eager consumers looking to secure tickets which often appear impossible to find.

Ticket fraud is where criminals set up fake websites or social media profiles to sell tickets for major events that are either fraudulent or don't exist. Victims are then left desperately disappointed that they are unable to enjoy themselves at their chosen event, whilst also being out of pocket too. Here we look into how ticket scams occur and provide tips on how you can avoid them in the future.

76,946 cases of purchase scams in first half of 2023 (includes concert tickets, holidays rentals, sporting event tickets) **



The average loss for concert ticket scams was **£110** and **£159** for football ticket scams.*

In 2023, concert ticket scams soared **529%** while football ticket scams rose by **101%***

£40.9m lost in first half of 2023 due to purchase scams**



Social Media

Social Media provides scammers an ideal channel to target victims. In this scam, victims find someone selling tickets for an event (often sold out) on a social media platform such as Facebook Marketplace through a personal account or fan page/group. The scammer will advertise tickets which are fraudulent and be in touch with victims (sometimes multiple) to arrange a transaction. Once money is transferred, outcomes often include:

- A promise that tickets will be sent to you when your details have been provided, however they never arrive
- Someone will meet you at the event on the day to hand them over, but no-one turns up
- You receive the tickets; however these turn out to be fake



Common signs of social media ticket scams to look out for and how to avoid them include:

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is

Eager to get a ticket for an event? Then a cheap deal may be so attractive you may not want to look elsewhere. From heavily discounted tickets to supposedly unmissable offers, if they sound too good to be true, they probably are. However, if you are willing to pay an extortionate price for a ticket, do not assume they are real, these can also be fake!

The seller's profile information doesn't add up

If you happen to be in touch with someone offering you tickets, check their social profile or page thoroughly. While some

fraudsters will design their profile to come across as trustworthy, some signs could affect their credibility. Things to look out for are:

- Lack of photos of themselves on the profile/page
- Very few or no followers on their profile/page
- They only have spam-like messages on their feed, or what they write doesn't seem genuine

The seller is pushy and relentlessly asks for payment (by bank transfer)

Scammers will commonly ask you to make a payment directly to their bank account so that it becomes hard to trace. They will happily push you into a guilt trip or increase the price to get you to make that payment.

Legitimate organisations and ticketing agents would not pressure you into buying a ticket, nor would they allow a bank transfer as a payment method.

Where possible, pay by credit card for increased protection.

The seller is offering tickets that are not yet on sale


If the tickets aren't officially on sale, this means the fraudster doesn't own those tickets yet. Before agreeing to anything, check the official event website and make sure the tickets have gone on sale. If they are available, it is much safer to buy directly through the venue's website or their authorised ticket agents.

Websites

Resell ticket websites are often selling tickets to shows or events that are sold out or in high demand. There are options to use, such as Twickets, Viagogo, StubHub or TicketSwap who have guarantees in place that will cover the cost of your ticket if you are scammed. However, scammers have become very sophisticated, employing advanced techniques to create convincing fake ticketing websites that deceive unsuspecting buyers by duplicating more reliable sites as those mentioned.

Similar to the social media ticket scams, people who are desperate to go to an event are drawn into paying for tickets that are unavailable elsewhere. Outcomes once payment has taken place include:

- Tickets are promised to be sent to you when your details have been provided, however they never arrive
- You receive the tickets; however, these turn out to be fake (fake bar codes for example)
- Ticket(s) are real but have been sold multiple times to different buyers, so the first person to arrive is granted admission and the others get turned away. This is becoming more common due to the increased use of QR codes and e-tickets.

 **For more information on ticket fraud, visit the Take Five website**

Consider these tips to help ensure the tickets you buy on resell sites are the real deal so you can attend that concert, festival or sporting event.

Star Member

It is always safest to book tickets through official sellers that are members of the self-regulatory body the Society of Ticket Agents and Retailers (STAR), as anything else could be a scam. STAR also offers a service to help customers resolve outstanding complaints.

Check site is secure and beware of duplicates

Make sure the website you purchase tickets from is secure. Look for the padlock symbol in the browser window. The web address should begin with 'https' (the 's' stands for secure) and if you're using the latest version of your browser the address bar should turn green as well. Check the URL address too as subtle changes can indicate that it's fraudulent, for instance using a zero instead of an 'O'.

Fraudulent websites can often be very sophisticated and sometimes look almost identical to the real thing. Do as much research as you can to ensure that the provider you are buying from is who they say they are. Check for contact and address details, grammar and quality of images. You can also use various URL checkers online to see if a website is safe and legitimate.

Box office

If possible, only buy tickets from the venue's box office, the promoter, an official agent or a well-known and trustworthy ticket exchange site.

Check reviews

Check for customer reviews of online ticket retailers on sites such as Trustpilot. Be wary of duplicated comments as this could indicate a company isn't genuine. Equally a lack of reviews could be a warning sign.

Protect purchases by paying via credit card

If you use your credit card to buy items costing more than £100 (up to £30,000), you're covered if something goes wrong with your purchase. This gives you an extra safety net if your tickets don't arrive.


Check ticket details

Check all ticket order details before confirming payment – including the date, price, event name and location – to make sure they are accurate. It sounds obvious but often people can get scammed by buying tickets for an event on a date which isn't taking place.

Check emails and keep receipts

You should receive an email booking confirmation when purchasing tickets from a trusted website. If you do not receive any booking confirmation (check junk mail too), this can often be a red flag to suggest you may have been scammed.

If you do receive a booking confirmation email, check this thoroughly for anything suspicious e.g. sender address, content lacking detail or incorrect grammar, links not working. In addition, keep all receipts, email confirmations and statements safe in case any problems occur down the line.

 **Have you been a victim of ticket fraud, report it to Action Fraud**

**<https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/beatthescammers/article-12850049/From-Taylor-Swift-tickets-Uggs-major-bank-lists-hot-scam-trends-2024.html>*

*** UK finance 2023 halfyear report - <https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/policy-and-guidance/reports-and-publications/2023-half-year-fraud-report>*

