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EXCLUSIVE

Ticket fever meets a digital 'Wild West' as experts warn new government price caps could fuel social media scams

New ticket resale price caps could push fans onto risky social media scams, experts have said

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A study found that 55% of people cannot confidently tell whether a ticket listing on social media is genuine. *Picture: LBC*



have warned that new government plans to cap resale ticket prices could unintentionally push desperate fans into the hands of online scammers.

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New research from consumer safety organisation [Get Safe Online](#), led by former cybercrime police officer Nick Hawe, found that 55% of people cannot confidently tell whether a ticket listing on social media is genuine.

In November, [the UK government announced its plans to introduce price caps on ticket resale platforms](#).

While designed to protect fans from inflated prices, some experts have said restricting regulated marketplaces could shrink the number of safe places to buy tickets — pushing more activity onto social media, where safeguards are minimal.

Hawe warned that fraudsters are already preparing to exploit fans across social media platforms.

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Ticket scams surged following the announcement of Oasis' return. *Picture: Getty*

He said: "Scammers will always be ahead of the game, sitting and waiting for buyers and targeting the places with the fewest protections.

"If activity is pushed away from regulated marketplaces, it will inevitably move into unregulated spaces."

[Research conducted by Get Safe Online](#) has suggested that many fans are already taking risks.

More than a quarter of Britons (26%) admitted to buying tickets through social media because they appeared cheap, only to later discover they were fake.

Victims lost a staggering average of £258.



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Yet when demand spikes for popular events, experts have said caution often gives way to urgency.

Hawe added: "We forget that the word fan comes from fanatical.

"When people are desperate to see their favourite artist — and caught up in the pressure of 'last few tickets remaining' and what feels like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity — they'll often take risks even when something doesn't quite feel right."



Ticket Safety Expert, Nick Hawe, has warned that government ticket resale price caps could push fans onto risky social media scams and urges using safe, regulated platforms with consumer protections. *Picture: PA*

Becca Healy, 25, learned that the hard way when she tried to buy a last-minute ticket online to see Irish singer CMAT in London.

"I'd bought tickets from people online before, so I thought I knew what to look for," she said.

"This Facebook account looked totally real. It had been set up many years prior and had a number of followers."

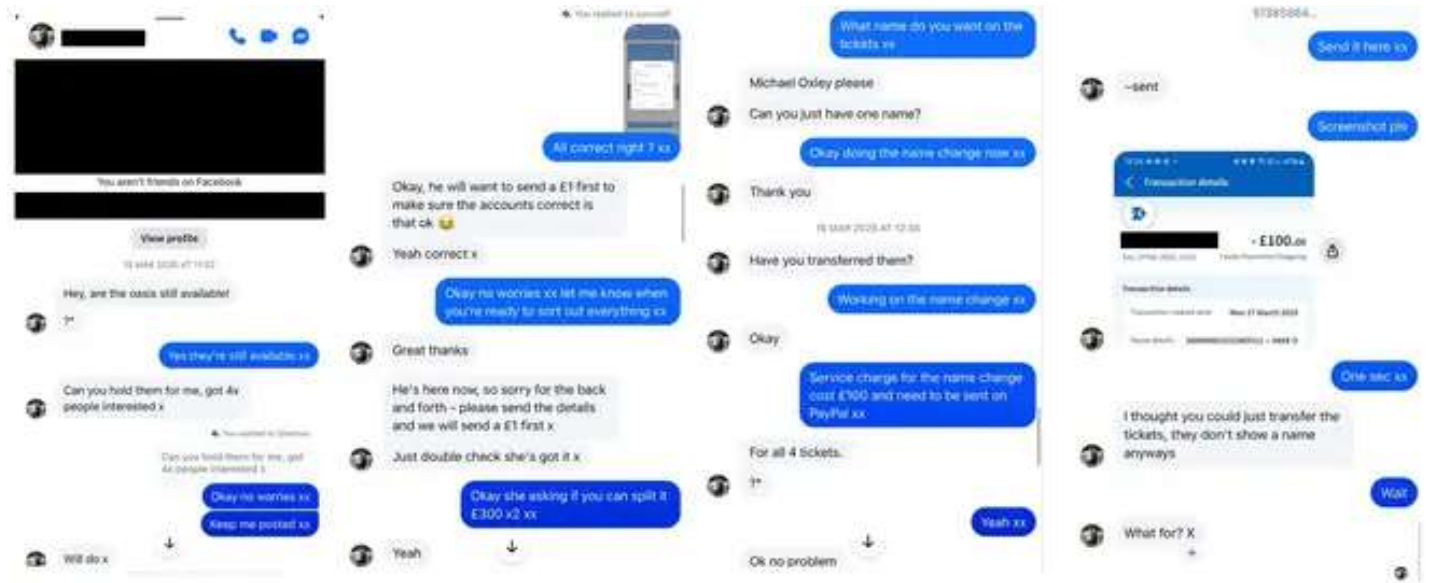
After chatting with the seller for some time, Healy transferred £30.

The Hackney resident received a ticket image with a QR code that looked authentic, but soon afterwards the account vanished, leaving no trace of its presence.

Healy admitted the experience also left her feeling embarrassed.

She said: "It was really awkward having to tell my friend I couldn't go with her because I'd fallen for a scam.

"When you've been chatting to someone, it feels more personal than just being scammed by a dodgy website."



Most Brits can't spot an authentic ticket on social media and risk being further exposed by the UK government's ticketing plan. *Picture: PA*

Cybersecurity specialists have said social media ticket scams are becoming more effective thanks to AI, which is helping scammers to exploit human behaviour rather than technical vulnerabilities.

AI-enabled cyberattacks have surged by 4,000% since 2022, allowing criminals to analyse social media profiles, craft convincing personas and tailor scams with "surgical precision".

According to cybersecurity expert Jemma Davis, fraudsters deliberately mimic legitimate marketing tactics.

"They use urgency, scarcity and emotional appeal — the same triggers used in everyday marketing," she said.

Davis added that the shame surrounding scams is only making the problem worse.

“We need to make it acceptable for people to say, ‘I’ve been scammed,’” she said.

“The more shame victims feel, the less likely they are to report it — and when incidents go unreported, the problem only grows.”



When NFL tickets went on sale in Dublin, the lack of legal resale options pushed fans to social media, leading to an 80% surge in ticket-scam victims. *Picture: Getty*

Critics of price caps have pointed to international examples as a warning.

In Ireland, where resale price restrictions have been in place for five years, ticket fraud rates stand at around 13.6% — nearly four times higher than in the UK.



victims and a 48% rise in financial losses, with people aged 17–24 among the hardest hit.

Bob Kupbens, chief executive of StubHub International, said the pattern is predictable.

“Fraudsters have always targeted fans on platforms with the fewest safeguards,” he said.

“If restrictions are introduced on regulated marketplaces, activity will move into unregulated spaces where consumers have little protection.”

Kupbens added that regulated platforms provide safeguards such as verified listings, secure payments and money-back guarantees — protections largely absent from social media sales.



StubHub chief executive Bob Kupbens has warned buyers of scams on unregulated space like social media. *Picture: Getty*

The government said its plans are designed to strengthen consumer protections rather than weaken them.

companies, to enforce price caps.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) will also be given new powers to act against companies that fail to comply, with penalties potentially reaching 10% of global turnover.

However, campaigners have said the broader problem is that public awareness has not kept pace with the scale of online fraud.

Davis argued the UK lacks a national strategy for teaching people how to stay safe online.

“We’ve spent decades teaching people how to cross the road,” she said. “But almost no time teaching them how to stay safe online.”



60% of people say they do not trust buying tickets on X, 54% on Instagram and 53% on Facebook. *Picture: Getty*

Have added that the risks are being underestimated.



linked to ticket scams.

Lloyds Banking Group reported that someone fell victim to a purchase scam on Facebook or Instagram around every six minutes, during the first half of 2025.

The bank has called on social media platforms to take more responsibility over the issue.

Liz Ziegler, Fraud Prevention Director at Lloyds Banking Group, said: "Social media companies are the single biggest helping hand to fraudsters we see.

"Scams devastate people financially, while social media companies profit from the money they charge scammers to run their fake ads, in the endless line of monetised rubbish overwhelming social media platforms, with no end in sight."

Hawe concluded: "This isn't something we can ignore.

"When the government itself acknowledges that around 200,000 tickets could be fraudulently sold as a result of the price caps, how can that sit comfortably with them?"

Instead, he urged fans to adopt a far more cautious approach online, directing consumers to websites like Get Safe Online, which offer services like webpage checks.

"We're in a world now where we have to treat almost everything online as suspicious."

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