



ISSUE 54

# SCAMS AWARENESS NEWSLETTER

MAY 2025

## WELCOME TO OUR Monthly Newsletter



### Holiday Fraud

With the sun shining our attention turns towards summer holidays and fun days out with the family. As you browse the internet looking for the perfect holiday destination it is important to remember to be vigilant and do your homework. Action Fraud has published new data revealing that victims lost a total of over £11 million to holiday fraud last year, 6,066 reports of holiday fraud reported, with July recorded as the highest month of reporting.

Fraudsters create fake online adverts, emails and text messages offering incredibly cheap rates to tempt you into booking a holiday with them. Often, they will steal images of hotels or rented apartments from other travel websites and use them as their own. You could arrive at the airport only to learn that you are not booked onto a flight, or once you arrive at your destination the accommodation may not have a reservation for you, or extras that were part of your booking – such as excursions or transport – aren't included.

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## Holiday Fraud Top Tips



✓ Never pay in cash or via a bank transfer, such as MoneyWise or Western Union, which can be difficult to trace and isn't refundable. Ideally pay using a credit card to benefit from the additional consumer protection this provides.

✓ Don't rely on logos, like ABTA and ATOL, these can be mimicked by fraudsters. Use the [Check for ATOL](#) tool to make sure the holiday provider is legitimate and has an ATOL licence.

✓ Always check the web address and make sure before entering any personal or banking information that the website has a padlock symbol in the browser window frame and the web address will begin with "https".

## Airport Parking Scams

Each year our partners at Trading Standards get numerous reports of fraudulent Airport Parking Scams. Do your research early and compare prices so you can get the best deal.

### Meet and Greet Airport Parking Scams

Meet and greet parking may be convenient but it is one of the most common airport parking scams. It is an easy way for criminals to get money from customers and park the car anywhere... You think your car has been parked in a safe and secure location; however, it could be parked in a muddy field in the middle of nowhere.

### The Safe and Secure Scam

Third-party parking operators often advertise their services as being in safe and secure locations. However, there have been reports of cars being left in open residential streets. Use Google Earth to view the location where your car will be parked before booking with the parking company. This will allow you to ensure that the location aligns with the description provided on the company's website.



## Ticket Fraud

Boarding Pass 				Boarding Pass 		
First Class						
PASSENGER NAME SURNAME						
FLIGHT NY-2356	FROM LONDON	TO NEW YORK	CLASS FIRST CLASS	GATE <b>A24</b>	TIME <b>8:12</b>	SEAT <b>7A</b>
GATE <b>A24</b>			TIME <b>8:12</b>	SEAT <b>7A</b>		
						

How many of us have sat pressing the 'refresh' button, or in an endless telephone que hopefully waiting to buy tickets to that must-see live event? Whether it is tickets to see your favourite band, comedian, or theatre production we all know the highs and lows of ticket purchasing. Unfortunately, so do criminals.

Action Fraud reports that ticket fraud increased by 50% from 2023 to 2024 with consumers losing £9.4 million last year.

Stay safe this summer from ticket fraud. Follow our top tips to avoid becoming a victim.

## Top Tips



Only buy tickets from the venue's box office, official promoter or agent, or a well-known ticketing website. If you are unsure of a website's legitimacy, you can check it by using [Get Safe Online's Check a Website tool](#).

Avoid buying tickets on social media where it is easier to become a victim of pressure techniques for a quick purchase. Also, many sellers on social media are unverified, increasing the risk of scams or counterfeit tickets. Plus, social media platforms often lack buyer protection, making it harder to get a refund if something does go wrong.

Verify the venue and date. If the event is taking place at a venue unknown to you, then confirm its existence through online maps and look for independent reviews. Once you have done so, search the original live event announcement or schedule on the artiste or production's website to make sure dates and location align.

Price check reality. If a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is. Avoid suspiciously cheap tickets.

Avoid paying for tickets by bank transfer, especially if buying from someone unknown. Credit card or payment services such as PayPal give you a better chance of recovering the money if you become a victim of fraud. Be wary of any sellers asking you to take the transaction off the platform.

Save your receipts. Keep copies of all confirmations and payments.

Monitor your bank statements. Watch out for any unauthorised charges.



## Current Holiday Scams



### Currency Scams:

Be cautious of street vendor's/kiosks offering unbeatable exchange rates, they might mix counterfeit bills with real ones. If you are using an ATM machine abroad, it's safer to use a machine inside a bank rather than on the street. Check for any signs of tampering around the card slot and keypad. And always shield the keypad with your hand when entering your PIN. Dynamic Currency Conversion – sometimes when making a purchase or withdrawing money we are given the option of paying in Sterling. While this might seem convenient, it often comes with high fees and poor exchange rates. So, you could end up paying more than necessary.

### Taxi Scams:

While most taxi drivers are honest, some seek to make extra cash by taking new arrivals on a circuitous route that costs twice as much as normal or charge an inflated rate. Where possible always use licenced cabs with meters. If a licensed taxi is not available, then make sure to agree on a price, in writing, if necessary, before setting off or even getting into the car.

**REMEMBER**

When travelling abroad get to know the currency in use, it is easy to make a mistake if you are not familiar with the coins/notes. In some cases, busy stores or street vendors may intentionally give you incorrect change, hoping you won't notice. Especially in places with currencies that have many coins or similar-looking notes. Always pause to count your change.

Always ask for a range of different bills when you get your travel money as sometimes vendors will say that they can't change high-value notes, leaving you paying over the odds for goods and/or services. Remember, you can always buy a small item – a bottle of water – with a large bill when you arrive at the airport or hotel before you go exploring.

If you are affected by the content of this bulletin, you can talk to us. Our Scams Awareness and Aftercare Team can offer free support, advice and guidance. Contact our team today on:



01625 612958



[scams@ageukcheshire.org.uk](mailto:scams@ageukcheshire.org.uk)