

SCAMS AWARENESS UPDATE

Older Persons Scams Awareness & Aftercare Project

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Watch out, watch out, there's a tout about!

It used to be that ticket touts lurked in alleyways near theatres and football stadiums selling tickets at inflated prices for popular shows and matches. Now the criminals don't even need to leave the comfort of their own homes to scam people out of their money for non-existent or overpriced tickets to an ever increasing range of events. This month, we take a look at ticketing fraud and give some top tips to ensure you get to the ball on time instead of being left out in the cold.

We had hoped, with restrictions lifting and eighteen months after the first lockdown, that COVID related scams would no longer exist. Unfortunately, that's not the case. Therefore, our current scams feature includes COVID-19 scams so that we keep alert to the ongoing threat.

If you have access to the internet, at home or maybe in your local library, remember you can revisit previous editions of our bulletins to remind yourself of the different featured scams on [our website](#). We also send out scams alerts on our [@AgeUKCE](#) Twitter account and our [@AgeUKCheshireEast](#) Facebook feed as they occur.

Ticketing fraud is when you pay for tickets from a website, newspaper or agent for an event, but the tickets either don't arrive or turn out to be fake and you aren't refunded.

The tickets could be for any event, from gardening and crafting, to music concerts and festivals; a sports match to a live comedian or performer.

The scammers play on the fact that the number of tickets is limited and they are in demand. This leads them to pressure people into buying tickets without completing the necessary checks to make sure they're genuine.



You find tickets online to a popular event.



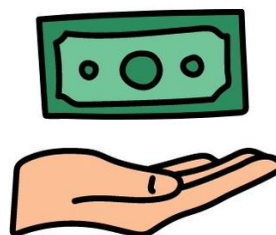
You pay for the tickets but they are never delivered; or...



...you may be told someone will meet you on the day with the tickets but they don't arrive.



Or, when you arrive at the venue you're told the tickets are fake.



There's no response from the company and no refund available.

In the first half of 2021, Action Fraud received over 1,000 reports of ticketing fraud, equating to almost a million pounds lost. In one incident, a victim lost more than £3,500 after buying tickets for a rugby tour via what appeared to be a legitimate ticket website. When the victim wanted a refund due to the uncertainty around travel, they were unable to contact the company. The company has since been dissolved and a number of other victims have reported a similar crime.

Not only is there financial loss, but also the disappointment of not being able to attend the event, or worse still explaining to family and friends who the tickets may have been bought for as a gift.

REMEMBER: If an offer is too good to be true, it usually is!

Check, check and check again.

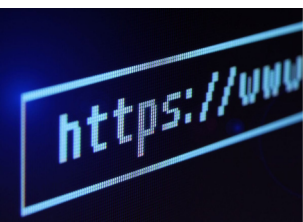
Maybe you're a seasoned ticket purchaser or perhaps there's a certain event that you've always wanted to attend.

For event goers old and new, here are some top tips to avoid being disappointed and scammed:



Only buy tickets from official vendors named on the event's publicity, the venue's box office or reputable sites. You can check online if they are [members of STAR](#), which has a strict code of conduct and lists companies details.

Never agree to meet someone at the venue on the day to collect tickets.



Check website addresses carefully. Criminals often use website addresses very similar to reputable websites, changing a few characters.

Look for the padlock and https in a website's address bar. This means information sent between your browser and the website (e.g. personal or bank details) are secure and cannot be intercepted.



Don't be pressured into making a quick decision with offers such as "Last few left" or "Only available at this price for 24 hours".

Check out all the terms and conditions, privacy notice and refund policy *before* buying tickets.



Be wary of adverts for tickets on social media and never click on links in the advert. When you accept cookies on a website, the information is used to suggest similar sites and offers. Scammers set up fake websites to be included in those suggestions.



Never pay for tickets by bank transfer. Pay by card or other secure methods such as PayPal or ApplePay. For purchases over £100, pay by credit card if you can, for better protection if things go wrong e.g. tickets are not delivered.

Keep all receipts until after the event has taken place.

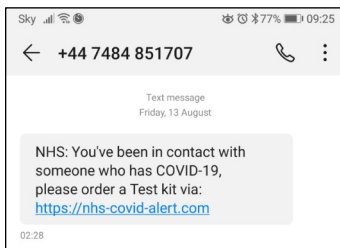
Regularly check bank statements to ensure only the agreed amount has been debited from your account.

REPORT IT!: If you find a ticketing scam but have not been a victim, you can help others by reporting it online to the [Citizen Advice Scams Action Service](#) or by calling 0808 250 5050.

If you have been a victim of ticketing fraud, report it to Action Fraud at www.actionfraud.police.uk or on 0300 1232040.

Here's a reminder of the current COVID-19 related scams to watch out for:

Close contacts testing scam text



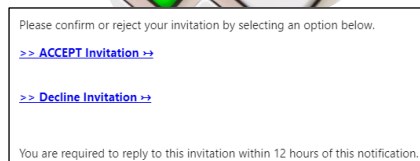
People have received a text pretending to be from the NHS. It says "NHS: You've been in contact with someone who has COVID-19, please order a test kit via (weblink)". The link takes you to an anti-scam/fraud warning. This may make you think it is legitimate. However, if you proceed, it is likely you will be directed to a fake website where you're asked for enough personal information to steal your identity or asked for bank details to "verify your identity".

It's easy to panic and click on the link, as scammers are using our natural response to authority (NHS). However, resist the click and order a test independently if you think you need one.

New twist to COVID pass scam email

Over the last few weeks, there has been a twist to the scam offering a COVID pass, which is needed to travel abroad and for admittance to some UK venues. The twist could make us more vulnerable to becoming victim to the scam. The scammers pile the pressure on by stating you only have 12 hours to respond. The twist is that there is an option to "Accept" or "Decline" the offer. Even if the "Decline" option is taken, it's likely to take you to a website that asks for personal information, or malware may be installed on your device.

As announcements continue to be made about the use of the COVID pass, scammers will continue to take advantage of confusion. Remember to always refer independently to the NHS website or call 119 for the most up to date genuine information.



Be alert to future COVID related scam possibilities

As the COVID winter recovery plans are announced and rolled out, scammers will be listening too, to see how they can use any changes to steal our money and information. Therefore, be alert to any calls, texts or emails about the planned COVID booster or winter flu jabs or the NHS Test and Trace system. Take a moment to think and then check information independently. The best sources of information are:



HM Government

www.gov.uk/coronavirus



www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19



Calling 119.

COMING NEXT TIME

- Current scams
- Saying "No"

Though we don't like to see you leave, you can unsubscribe from these bulletins by emailing sally.wilson@ageukce.org

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