

High cost of re-sale tickets results in ban

1 Warmer

a. Discuss the following questions.

1. What is the average cost of a ticket to see a pop star or a major sports event in your country?
2. Is it legal for individuals or organisations to buy tickets and re-sell them for a higher price in your country? If so, what is the average price for these tickets?
3. Have you ever attended a large concert or sports event? If so, where did you buy your ticket?

2 Key words

a. Match the words with their definitions. Then look at how the words are used in the article to check your understanding of them. The paragraph numbers are in brackets to help you find them quickly. Read the complete article to see how the words are used in context.

ban (1)

face value (2)

shares (9)

crackdown (1)

resale (1)

blow (8)

touts (1)

hidden costs (5)

admission (1)

industrial-scale (6)

cap (5)

outlawed (2)

1. _____: a big problem
2. _____: the act of buying something and then selling it again
3. _____: done on an enormous level
4. _____: to limit an amount
5. _____: to prohibit
6. _____: strong legislation or official action to stop or limit an activity
7. _____: parts of a company owned by individuals or organisations
8. _____: original price shown on a ticket
9. _____: prohibited; made illegal
10. _____: extra charges that aren't obvious to consumers
11. _____: people who resell tickets at a higher price
12. _____: access to a place or event after buying a ticket

b. Complete the sentences with words from the previous activity.

1. In the USA, the _____ of cigarettes on the street is banned.
2. When the stock market went down, it was a big _____ to investors.
3. Fortunately, we sold our _____ in the company before it went out of business.
4. I would never pay more than _____ for an event ticket.
5. Airlines add a lot of _____ that consumers don't see, which raises ticket prices.
6. In many countries, there has been a(n) _____ on the prescription of unnecessary drugs and medical procedures.
7. I think the government needs to _____ the amount of service fees that ticket sellers can charge to maybe 10 per cent above the ticket price.
8. The rising price of _____ to sports events means that most fans can't afford to buy tickets.

UK to ban resale of tickets above face value for live events

AGGRESSIVE CRACKDOWN ON TOUTS COME AFTER BACKLASH OVER COST OF WATCHING LIVE MUSIC AND SPORT

BY DANIEL THOMAS AND JIM PICKARD IN LONDON

- 1 UK ministers plan to ban the resale of tickets for live events above their original cost, in an aggressive crackdown on touts and resellers who sharply increase the price of admission to concerts and sports events.
- 2 In plans to be announced on Wednesday, reselling a ticket above face value will be outlawed, government and industry figures told the Financial Times.
- 3 The big profits made by resellers were highlighted last year when thousands of Oasis fans complained about the cost of buying tickets to see the band in 2025.
- 4 Some tickets for Oasis shows at Wembley Stadium in London were listed at more than 4,000 British pounds — well above their original value.
- 5 New legislation being drawn up by the Labour government will also cap service fees charged by resale platforms to stop price limits being undermined by the addition of hidden costs to a ticket.
- 6 Ministers want to make it illegal for people to resell more tickets than they were entitled to buy in the initial sale, in an attempt to end industrial-scale touting, in which bots are used to buy up vast numbers of tickets.
- 7 The government declined to comment.
- 8 The proposed changes would be a blow to popular secondary ticket platforms such as Viagogo and StubHub.
- 9 Shares in StubHub, which resells tickets under the StubHub brand in North America and the Viagogo brand elsewhere, fell almost 14 per cent on Monday.
- 10 Secondary ticketing platforms argue that proposals to limit price increases risk creating an illegal black market for tickets.
- 11 A spokesperson for StubHub International, which is a separate business to StubHub and resells tickets in the UK, Germany and other parts of Europe, criticised the British government's plans.
- 12 "With a price cap on regulated marketplaces, ticket transactions will move to black markets. When a regulated market becomes a black market, only bad things happen for consumers," they said.
- 13 Some MPs and industry groups have also argued that limiting the price of resold tickets would lead to fewer consumer protections.
- 14 But fans have been left frustrated by intermediaries selling tickets for increasingly high prices.
- 15 The outcry over tickets for the Oasis reunion led ministers to launch a consultation in January into options for a crackdown, initially focused on a cap at 30 per cent above the original face value of a ticket.
- 16 But Wednesday's announcement will go further, with a total ban on sales "above original cost" for tickets to concerts, sport, comedy and theatre.
- 17 The new rules are expected to shave up to £40 from the average cost of a resale ticket, saving tens of millions of pounds for fans every year.
- 18 In a statement last week, artists such as Coldplay, Dua Lipa, Mogwai and Radiohead called on Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer to cap ticket resale prices and tackle "extortionate and pernicious" websites used by touts.
- 19 Touts cost gig-goers about 145 million British pounds a year in elevated prices, according to Let's Stamp it Tout, a campaign started by Virgin Media O2, which is also part of the FanFair Alliance, comprising managers and teams for artists including the Arctic Monkeys and Ed Sheeran.

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- 20 It said that one in five tickets ended up on a resale platform.
- 21 Analysis by Virgin Media O2 of resale sites this summer found that tickets for acts such as Diana Ross, Oasis and Lady Gaga in London were being resold for up to 490 per cent on average above face value.
- 22 Its research found that traders selling more than 100 tickets a year accounted for more than 82 per cent of tickets on resale sites for a Billie Eilish concert, highlighting what it called the extent of the work of “industrial-scale” touts.



Daniel Thomas and Jim Pickard, 17 November, 2025.

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3 Understanding the article

a. Are these sentences True or False according to the information in the article?

Tick (✓) the correct sentences and rewrite the false ones.

1. The UK government plans to force event organisers to lower ticket prices.
2. The planned legislation is the result of complaints about the resale of tickets for a concert.
3. Companies that resell tickets often add extra fees to the price.
4. Touts use software applications to buy large numbers of event tickets.
5. A spokesperson said that legislation to cap prices will end black market sales of tickets.
6. The final legislation will cap the resale of tickets at 30 per cent above face value.
7. Ticket resales cost consumers about 145,000 British pounds a year in increased prices.
8. Many artists are in favour of the legislation to ban ticket resales.

4 Business language – laws and regulations

a. Complete the sentences with the phrases in the box.

draw up legislation

regulated market

industry group

consumer protections

black market

1. In a(n) _____, a government or a labour organisation has some control over prices and rules for buying and selling.
2. When members of a government body write a proposal for a new law or regulation, they _____.
3. A(n) _____ is an organisation of similar businesses or companies that work together to promote the interests of the sector.
4. A(n) _____ is the buying and selling of legal or illegal goods in a way that avoids things like government regulation or taxes.
5. _____ are the laws and regulations that prevent unethical or illegal business practices such as fraud and over-pricing.

b. Complete the sentences from the article with phrases from the previous activity. In one case, the form of the verb is different from the base form in task a. When you have finished, scan the article to check your answers.

When a(n) (1) _____ becomes a(n) (2) _____, only bad things happen for consumers," they said.

Some MPs and (3) _____ have also argued that limiting the price of resold tickets would lead to fewer (4) _____.

New (5) _____ by the Labour government will also cap service fees charged by resale platforms to stop price limits being undermined by the addition of hidden costs to a ticket.

5 Discussion

a. Discuss these questions.

1. Do you think legislation to ban the resale of event tickets will result in even higher ticket prices on the black market? Why or why not?
2. Do you think governments should allow legal resale companies like StubHub or Viagogo to exist, and if so, should there be price caps on tickets?

6 Wider business theme – free vs regulated markets

a. Look at some differences between free markets and regulated markets. Then answer the questions below.

In free markets ...

- there are few to no government rules on prices and operational standards
- supply and demand determine prices; companies can charge as much as consumers will pay but not more than they will pay
- innovation and competition are promoted, so consumers have many product options
- there are not many consumer or environmental protections
- there can be monopolies that prevent smaller companies from starting up or being successful
- fewer regulations can mean that more people can afford to have small businesses, and that creates jobs

In regulated markets ...

- there are numerous government rules and restrictions related to prices and operational standards
- the government has some control over prices; lower- and middle-income consumers may be able to afford things that only the rich can afford in totally free markets
- there are consumer protections for consumer and environmental safety and fair prices as well as rules against monopolies
- regulations can promote economic stability because they protect national companies and prevent risky business practices
- regulations can reduce market efficiency (natural effects of supply and demand) and make it difficult for small businesses to start or operate
- workers have more protection in terms of safety, minimum wages and job security

1. Are the high prices of event tickets sold by individuals or companies like StubHub and Viagogo the result of free-market or regulated-market practices?
2. Are the effects of ticket resales on consumers primarily positive or negative, in your opinion?
3. Many products sold online are made in countries with few government regulations on age, salaries or working conditions of workers. However, the low prices of those products mean that lower- to middle-income people can afford them. Are you in favour of or against restrictions on the sale of products from those types of countries?

b. Discuss your ideas in groups.

Useful language:

I'm in favour of / against the regulation of / regulating ...

I think most government regulations are fair / unfair to consumers / businesses because ...

I think / don't think it's the role of government to ...