

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?
4. Do you think governments should have any responsibility to regulate prices of luxury, or non-essential, items like concert tickets? What about prices of essential items, like food or transportation?

2 Key words

a. Read the definitions and find key words in the article to match them. The paragraph numbers are given in brackets to help you find the words quickly. Then read the complete article to check that you understand how the words are used in context.

1. _____: a very negative effect (paragraph 1)
2. _____: made weaker or less effective (paragraph 5)
3. _____: done on an enormous level (paragraph 6)
4. _____: to limit an amount (paragraph 5)
5. _____: to prohibit or make illegal (paragraph 1)
6. _____: prohibited; made illegal (paragraph 2)
7. _____: strong legislation or official action to stop or limit an activity (paragraph 1)
8. _____: online platforms that connect buyers and sellers of products (paragraph 12)
9. _____: original price shown on a ticket (paragraph 2)
10. _____: having the right to do or have something (paragraph 6)
11. _____: people who resell tickets at a higher price (paragraph 1)
12. _____: access to a place or event after buying a ticket (paragraph 1)

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

1. Stock exchanges are an example of regulated _____.
2. When the stock market went down sharply, it was a big _____ to investors.
3. Under the terms of the contract, employees are _____ to a certain number of shares in the company.
4. I would never pay more than _____ for an event ticket.
5. Exceptions to the new law have _____ its effectiveness and hurt efforts to stop pricing abuses.
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.
9. The large number of tickets sold by _____ rather than by official outlets has caused prices to increase dramatically.
10. It appears that there is _____ gambling in many professional sports.

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.

Continued on next page

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.

FT

Claer Barrett, 11 October, 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. Proposed government legislation in the UK would force event organisers to sharply lower ticket prices.
2. The planned legislation is the result of consumer activism regarding the resale of tickets for a specific concert.
3. The new legislation is designed to prevent ticket sellers from circumventing price caps by adding service fees to ticket prices.
4. In the UK, there is no limit to the number of tickets that one person can buy from ticket sales outlets.
5. A spokesperson for a ticket resale company claimed that the legislation would increase black market ticket sales.
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.
9. Currently, about 20 percent of event tickets in the UK are resold for higher prices.
10. The majority of ticket resales are done by individuals buying and reselling fewer than 100 tickets per year.

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 exercise. In one case, the form of the verb is different from the base form in 4a. 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. In your opinion, would a total ban on the resale of event tickets have more positive or more negative effects on consumers?
2. Should resale companies like StubHub or Viagogo be allowed to exist, and if so, what regulations, if any, should be placed on them?

6 Wider business theme – free vs regulated markets

- a. You and your partner are going to prepare a debate about free vs regulated markets. Read the lists of differences between free markets and regulated markets to help you formulate your arguments.

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

- b. Have the debates. At the end of each debate, the class will decide who won the debate. Your decision should be based on who presented the best arguments in the most convincing manner, not on personal beliefs about the topic.

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 believe that it's the role of government to ...

I believe that the evidence / common sense supports free/regulated markets.

From the perspective of consumers / workers / economic growth, it would be better to ...