



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP
Culture Secretary
Department for Culture, Media & Sport
100 Parliament Street
London, SW1A 2BQ

18 August 2016

Dear Karen,

I write to you as Co-Chair of the APPG on Ticket Abuse following a fact-finding mission by our cross-party campaign to Wembley Stadium on the 6th August where a delegation from the APPG on Ticket Abuse namely; myself, Nigel Adams MP, Kerry McCarthy MP and Reg Walker from Iridium Consultancy, were able to see the operation of ticket touts ahead of the Liverpool versus Barcelona match.

This fact-finding mission was to give members of our APPG an insight into how ticket touts operate and to understand further what work is needed by Parliament and the Government to ensure that fans are not continually ripped off by ticket touts and can finally be put first in a market which fails to offer them the transparency and protections from fraudulent activity and abuses in the market.

On the fact finding mission we saw first-hand, an example where a teenage Barcelona fan was ripped off after paying £170 for a ticket to the match after being told the ticket was £100, when in fact, it was £26. We also saw a number of prominent ticket touts in operation, many with criminal convictions for fraud & firearms and also various public order offences, drug offences and theft charges. In total there were around 50 touts in operation ahead of the match, along the iconic walk down Olympic Way to Wembley Stadium, committing offences openly and unchallenged. There is not another national stadium within Europe where you see this taking place, which in turn damages UK plc.

Whilst much of this would need enforcement by local authorities, the police and government agencies, there is still a blueprint that can be picked up by the Government to begin the process of addressing many of the issues around ticket touts and also issues seen in the secondary market which have been continually reported in the press, most recently with Harry Potter and the Cursed Child where it is estimated that up to 60 people have been turned away due to buying fake tickets or ones which have been cancelled due to being sold against the terms and conditions of buying the ticket. Also, evidence handed to me personally found that tickets were being sold at £4999, a mark-up of 4970%.



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The blueprint in question is the recommendations set out in the Waterson Review, a report commissioned by both your predecessor, John Whittingdale, and the former Business Secretary, Sajid Javid, to look into the secondary market and set out action plans for what more needs to be done since the passing of the Consumer Rights Act at the end of the last Parliament, and was published in May of this year.

Key recommendations included an investigation by the Police and National Trading Standards into the compliance of the law by the secondary ticketing market, which after our fact-finding mission should include looking at street-level trading, along with other recommendations on enforcement action around breaches of the transparency measures set out in the Consumer Rights Act 2015, including an onus on secondary platforms to ensure these measures are being met by sellers and also identifying 'traders', or as they are more commonly-known 'power-sellers', by secondary ticketing platforms to be actioned and if not, for the Government to consider a licensing system.

Sadly, there has been no progress since this review was published in May, and I hope in your new position at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, that you will work with your colleagues in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to ensure there is finally some movement to bring about actions for fans to be put first in this market.

Fans are keen to see more action taken, too. For example, a petition was set up on the Parliamentary petition's website which has called for further action on transparency measures in the secondary market, and has gained the support of bands and artists, such as Mumford and Sons, One Direction, and Little Mix. The petition currently stands at 45,965 and continues to rise, showing the clear interest by the general public for more to be done in this market.

This is also complemented by the launch of a new fan-based campaign group, called FanFair Alliance, and is calling on the Government to take four pragmatic steps around fraudulent activity in the secondary market, including enforcement of legislation, further transparency, corporate responsibility of resale platforms around consumer protection legislation, and addressing use of technology, such as 'bots', which harvest tickets and stop fans from getting tickets in the first place. You can find out more on their website here: <http://fanfairalliance.org/>

I hope that in your new position that you will be able to take this important agenda forward, and work alongside the cross-party campaign here in Parliament and the fans, music bodies, sports organisations and the many others who are keen to see action taken to address issues in the secondary ticketing market and ticket touts in general.



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I would be happy to meet together with the cross-party officers of the group to discuss this further, or to invite you to a speak with the wider APPG in the future to see what more we can do to work together on this issue. If this is agreeable with you, my Parliamentary researcher, Daniel Tye, can be reached at daniel.tye@parliament.uk to find a mutually convenient time to meet or to speak to the group.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Hodgson".

Mrs Sharon Hodgson MP

Member of Parliament for Washington & Sunderland West
Co-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Ticket Abuse

Cc. Lord Moynihan, Kerry McCarthy MP, Nick Smith MP, Stephen McPartland MP, Nigel Adams MP.