



IRFU

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Irish Rugby Football Union
P.R. Browne
Chief Executive

Competition and Consumer Policy Section,
Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation,
Earlsfort Centre,
Lower Hatch Street,
Dublin 2.

27th April 2017

Ticket resales for Entertainment and Sporting Events

Dear Sirs,

We refer to previous correspondence and thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this matter.

It must be emphasised that the control of our tickets is of paramount importance to the IRFU as the revenue which accrues from ticket sales is a vital source of funding which supports the game of rugby in Ireland. Although the IRFU wish to reserve its position on the introduction of legislation around the issue of ticket resale in Ireland, we would welcome the opportunity to enter into a further comprehensive consultation process on this issue. We have reviewed your consultation paper in detail and have enclosed our responses to the queries raised below.

We trust this answers the questions posed and if we can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

Declan McPhillips | Head of Legal & Compliance

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Question 1

What proportion of primary ticket sales are accounted for respectively by –

- a) online sales
- b) telephone sales
- c) sales through agents in retail outlets
- d) box office sales

IRFU tickets are distributed to:

- a) Provinces who allocate to the Club Structure
- b) 10 Year Ticket Holders
- c) Commercial Partners
- d) IRFU Supporters Club

The remainder of tickets are released on general sale which is usually limited to November International fixtures.

Question 2

Approximately how many entertainment and sporting events each year in which you are involved or about which you have information give rise to a significant level of secondary ticket sales? What characteristics, if any, do these events have in common? Do they wholly or mainly involve large-scale events in major venues?

There are potentially 5 or 6 fixtures each year which may be affected by secondary ticket sales but these are usually limited to highly sought after Six Nations and Tier 1 opposition fixtures.

Question 3

What proportion of tickets offered for sale on secondary marketplaces and platforms are sold -

- a) for a price above the face value of the ticket (plus any applicable service charges or booking fees)
- b) at the face value of the ticket
- c) for a price below the face value of the ticket
- d) fail to sell.

Information on the size of the mark-ups above, or discounts below, face value prices would also be welcome.

We do not have this information.

Question 4

How common is ticket fraud involving the supply of fake tickets or the non-delivery of tickets? How frequently, and in what numbers, are persons producing fake tickets denied access to entertainment and sporting events?

As a result of increased security, designated seating and barcoding on tickets, the IRFU believe this is no longer a significant issue.



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Question 5

What proportion of tickets for high-demand entertainment events are typically allocated for pre-sale or other allocation prior to going on general sale to the public? What parties or groups are the main recipients of such pre-sales and pre-allocations?

The vast majority of tickets are allocated for pre-sale to Provinces/Clubs, the Visiting Union's allocation and other stakeholder groups in the IRFU family.

Question 6

Are you aware of tickets being supplied to secondary sellers or marketplaces by persons involved in the primary market for entertainment or sporting events such as artists and their representatives, promoters or primary ticket sellers? If so, how prevalent is the practice and what is its scale?

No we are not aware of this.

Question 7

Are parties who engage in ticket resale on a systematic basis and on a significant scale a feature of the secondary ticket market in Ireland? What proportion of secondary sales for high-demand events are accounted for by such sellers? Do such sellers receive more preferential terms, such as early payment, from secondary marketplaces?

We have no information on this.

Question 8

Is there evidence of the use of software (bots) to source multiple tickets for high-demand events on the primary market in Ireland and to circumvent security measures? How common or extensive is the use of such software for this purpose?

We have no information on this.

Question 9

What means other than bots are used to obtain large numbers of tickets on the primary market for the purpose of resale?

We have no information on this.

Question 10

What proportion of tickets offered for resale for major entertainment and sporting events in Ireland are listed by sellers from outside Ireland?

We have no information on this.

Question 11

What actions are currently taken by primary ticket sellers and ticketing service providers to prevent purchases in excess of the contractually permitted number of tickets or resales in breach of the terms of the primary ticket contract? What is the level of ticket cancellations for the breach of such terms? What is the level of denial of access to venues and stadia for breach of such terms?



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The IRFU impose certain limits on the number of tickets which may be purchased, the IRFU also have a system of traceability in place to track tickets, all tickets are sold subject to our terms and conditions attached to the tickets and internal procedures are in place to adjudicate on any breaches.

Question 12

Do secondary marketplaces consider themselves to be under an obligation to assist event organisers who wish to identify ticket resellers acting in breach of their contract with the primary seller? Should they do so? Should they be required to do so?

We have no information on this but feel that this should form part of the discussion in a further consultation process.

Question 13

Should websites which sell tickets for an event on the primary market redirect purchasers to secondary platforms selling tickets to the same event? Should any such redirection be subject to a requirement that the consumer be informed of the status of the secondary site and that ticket prices are likely to be higher?

Currently the IRFU do not permit any tickets to be redirected to secondary platforms and at all times the IRFU encourages its customers to purchase tickets through the official IRFU channels.

Question 14

How many events in Ireland and what proportion of their tickets, have featured 'Platinum Tickets' or other dynamic-pricing approaches to ticket pricing? What was the average price of such tickets? Did they sell out?

We are unaware of this as the IRFU do not currently implement a dynamic pricing system.

Question 15

Is a dynamic pricing approach to event tickets likely to be adopted on a significant scale? If so, when and for what type of event is this likely to occur? If not, what are the main reasons why it will not be pursued?

See answer above.

Question 16

What additional steps, if any, could performers and their managements, sporting bodies and event promoters take to minimise secondary ticket selling at inflated prices and ensure fairer access to tickets for fans.

The IRFU are happy to participate and contribute in a further consultation process around the introduction of legislation.

Question 17

What additional technical measures, if any, are primary ticket sellers planning to implement or develop to prevent purchases made with the use of bots?



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This is a matter which is addressed by our primary ticket partner, all other tickets are processed manually.

Question 18

Are personalised or paperless tickets an effective method for curbing ticket resale? What drawbacks, if any, are associated with such approaches? Has experience with these methods in Ireland been positive, negative or mixed?

The IRFU already have a system of traceability and in our experience this system is largely positive however, in a small number of cases tickets have found their way on to secondary ticket markets

Question 19

Do primary sellers or venues offer a facility for the return and refund of tickets that purchasers are unable to use? If so, what conditions apply to this facility? If not, what are reasons why primary sellers do not offer this facility? Would they consider the introduction of such a facility and, if so, under what conditions?

No. The demand for tickets is ascertained from each Province/Club in advance of fixtures and any tickets which are returned to the Province/Club are then redistributed through that Province/Club.

Question 20

Do secondary ticketing websites consider themselves under an obligation to ensure that resellers who qualify as traders under relevant consumer protection legislation inform consumers of their status as traders and of the rights that consumers buying from such sellers have under that legislation?

We have no information on this.

Question 21

Should legislation be introduced to regulate ticket resale and the secondary ticketing market? If so, what form should such legislation take and what penalties should apply to breaches of its provisions? If not, what are the reasons why legislative measures should not be pursued?

The control of our tickets is of paramount importance to the IRFU as the accruing revenue is the lifeblood for the game of rugby. As a not for profit organisation, the IRFU welcome the opportunity to have further input into this discussion in an appropriate forum.