

Flight Ticket Fraud - 07.02.18

Fraudsters are attempting to entice victims who are looking for cheap flights abroad.

Victims have reported booking tickets via websites or a "popular" ticket broker, only to discover that after payment via bank transfer or electronic wire transfer, the tickets/booking references received are counterfeit. In some cases, all communications between the company or broker and the victim have been severed.

Fraudsters are targeting individuals who are seeking to travel to African nations and the Middle East, particularly those wishing to travel in time for popular public and religious holidays.

Prevention Advice:

- Pay safe: Be cautious if you're asked to pay directly into a private individual's bank account. Paying by direct bank transfer is like paying by cash - the money is very difficult to trace and is not refundable. Wherever possible, pay by credit card or a debit card.
- Conduct research on any company you're considering purchasing tickets from; for example, are there any negative reviews or forum posts by previous customers online? Don't just rely on one review - do a thorough online search to check the company's credentials.
- Check any company website thoroughly; does it look professional? Are there any spelling mistakes or irregularities? There should be a valid landline phone number and a full postal address so that the company can be contacted. Avoid using the site if there is only a PO Box address and mobile phone number, as it could be difficult to get in touch after you buy tickets. PO Box addresses and mobile phone numbers are easy to change and difficult to trace.
- Be aware that purchasing tickets from a third party, particularly when initial contact has been made via a social media platform can be incredibly risky.
- If tickets to your intended destination appear cheaper than any other vendor, always consider this; if it looks too good to be true, it probably is!
- Look for the logo: Check whether the company is a member of a recognised trade body such as ABTA or ATOL. You can verify membership of ABTA online, at www.abta.com.

- If you have been affected by this, or any other type of fraud, report it to Action Fraud by calling 0300 123 2040, or visiting www.actionfraud.police.uk.