

News story: IoH and AI surrender Ofqual recognition

The Institute of Hospitality (IoH) has surrendered its status as an Ofqual recognised awarding organisation. IoH informed Ofqual in October 2017 of its intention to surrender its recognition in early 2018. Following a period of engagement the surrender has taken effect as of 28 February. From this date, no qualifications offered by the IoH are regulated by Ofqual. The IoH previously offered three regulated qualifications which have been subsumed into another regulated awarding organisation, the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality (CTH). IoH has exited the regulated market in an orderly manner.

Accountants Institute (AI) has surrendered its status as an Ofqual-recognised awarding organisation. AI informed Ofqual in mid-February of its imminent intention to surrender recognition. The surrender took effect as of 28 February. From this date, no qualifications offered by AI are regulated by Ofqual. AI previously offered one regulated qualification which has never had any certificated learners in England. We understand no learners are affected by this surrender.

When awarding organisations are considering surrendering their recognition, our recognition team stand ready to discuss the options for proceeding whilst ensuring learners are protected.

A full list of currently recognised awarding organisations and regulated qualifications can be found on the [Register of Regulated Qualifications](#).

Press release: New rules will protect fans from ticket touting

- New rules will require ticket resellers to provide more information around resold event tickets, protecting consumers from rip off prices
- Resellers now have to supply any unique ticket numbers (UTN) to the buyer to identify the ticket's seat, standing area or location
- Changes build on government's action to increase transparency for consumers in the secondary market

Fans of live events are set to benefit from new rules coming into force today (6 April) which will demand more information from sellers on secondary ticket websites to better protect fans from rip-off prices.

For the first time resellers will have to quote the 'unique ticket number' (UTN) to a buyer, if the event organiser specifies one, helping to identify the ticket's seat, standing area or location.

Current guidance requiring the disclosure of any restrictions and the original price of tickets have also been clarified today in order to improve compliance from businesses, ensuring better deals for customers.

Consumer Minister Andrew Griffiths said:

Fans have a right to know exactly what they're signing up to on ticket resale websites, but all too often people are left feeling ripped off when the ticket doesn't match expectations.

We are already taking steps to crack down on touts using "bots" to bulk buy tickets for resale and today's new rules will also improve transparency in this market.

Adam Webb, Campaign Manager, FanFair Alliance said:

So-called secondary ticketing sites should now have complete clarity of their legal obligations.

Combined with enforcement action, these welcome updates and additions to consumer law will result in greater protection for audiences and help development of a more transparent and fan-friendly ticket resale market.

Margot James, Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries, said:

We want real fans to get the chance to see their favourite stars at a fair price and we are clamping down on touts using bots to buy huge numbers of tickets, only to sell them on at rip-off prices.

These new measures will give consumers even greater protection and transparency in the secondary market, helping Britain's live events scene to continue to thrive.

From today ticket resellers must:

- identify the location to which the ticket provides access – such as the particular seat or standing area of the venue
- disclose any restrictions around who can use the ticket or how it must be used (e.g. alongside ID of the original buyer)
- disclose the original price of the ticket
- reveal the details of connections they have with either the online facility on which they are selling, or the organiser of the event for which the ticket is being sold

- supply the unique ticket number (UTN) to a buyer if the event organiser specifies one.

Today's rules demonstrate a further commitment from government to improve conditions for consumers in the secondary market. The [Competition and Markets Authority](#) is taking enforcement action against secondary ticketing websites suspected of breaking consumer law, whilst the [Advertising Standards Authority](#) has acted to clamp down on misleading prices and charges on secondary ticketing websites.

[New guidance](#) was published last month to help prepare business for these changes, providing clarity to ensure they comply while also securing a better deal for consumers.

Citizens Advice provide [information for consumers](#) about buying event tickets and how to make sure a ticketing site is genuine.

Citizens Advice consumer helpline: 03454 04 05 06

[News story: New independent appeals process to protect passengers issued with penalty fares](#)

New rules coming into force today (6 April 2018) will offer a greater level of protection for rail passengers issued with a penalty fare, where they make an honest mistake, Rail Minister Jo Johnson has announced.

Fare dodgers will continue to receive tough penalties, but those with a genuine reason for not having a valid ticket will now be able to challenge a penalty with an independent committee, not connected to the rail companies. Once an appeal is received, the clock will stop on the 21 day deadline for the payment of a penalty fare, until the outcome is resolved.

The process will also give greater consideration to circumstances of how and why the penalty was issued, to ensure people are not unfairly penalised.

Rail Minister Jo Johnson said:

Rail users should make every effort to get the right ticket for their journey, but if you make an honest mistake, you should feel confident that the appeals system will recognise this and treat you fairly.

We are simplifying the rules around penalty fares and introducing an independent appeals process to help those who make a genuine

error when using the railway.

The penalty fares guidance was last updated in 2002 and the new regulations will make the appeals system more consistent and clearer across rail companies. This includes reducing the existing 3 documents of guidance on penalty fares down to one simple document.

[Penalty fares promotional video](#)

Jac Starr, Managing Director of Customer Experience at the Rail Delivery Group, said:

Customers sometimes make genuine mistakes and the changes to the penalty fares system, which is meant to deter fare dodgers, will help those who feel they have been mistreated and ensure there is enough time to deal with their appeal.

Fare dodgers deprive the railway of about £200 million every year, money which would otherwise be invested to improving Britain's railway for customers, communities and the economy.

A penalty fare can be issued where an individual travels without a valid ticket, or is unable to produce a railcard on a discounted ticket, stays on the train beyond the destination they have paid for or travels in the wrong class.

Passengers receive a charge of either £20 or twice the full single fare from the station where they got on the train to the next station at which the train stops.

The Rail Delivery Group is today publishing new [best practice guidance on the new penalty fare regime](#)

For information about the penalty appeal services, visit the [penalty services](#) and [appeal services](#) websites.

Press release: Quicker way to resolve claim disputes launched online

The new service, introduced by HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS), can be used to start a claim against anyone in England and Wales, and provides a quicker, more user-friendly way to start an action in the County Court for amounts up to £10,000.

Rather than having to fill in and post a paper form, or use an outdated online system from 2002, the new pilot allows people to issue their County Court claim more easily, settle the dispute online and recommends mediation services – which can save time, stress, and money.

More than 1,400 people have already used an earlier pilot of the system launched in August last year. Over 80% of those early users, including individuals and small businesses, found the service very good and easy to use. Early evidence suggests that the online system has improved access to justice as engagement from defendants has improved.

Launching the new service, Justice Minister Lucy Fraser said:

We know that using the civil courts has been a daunting prospect for some. This innovative, quick and easy online system will enable people and small businesses to get back the money that is rightly owed to them.

This is an excellent example of the work we are doing under our £1 billion plan to transform the courts system, allowing people to access justice online and around their busy lives.

Justice Birss, who chairs the sub-committee of the Civil Procedure Rules Committee dealing with this Civil Money Claims pilot scheme, said:

This is an important step in the modernisation of our courts and tribunals system.

For too long the perceived delays and complexity of the system have put off too many people from using the civil courts to make a small claim. When it is complete this new online route will give members of the public and small businesses a more user-friendly way to access justice. The system now being made available to the public is the first stage in that new route.

Laura Iron, head of service at the Personal Support Unit, a charity supporting people who choose to represent themselves in the civil and family justice system, said:

“The PSU welcomes the new online system: It avoids most of the formal legal language of traditional court processes, and is much more intuitive for users. While traditional processes are still the norm, this is a clear step forward for people who are comfortable with online processes. It reflects the commitment of HMCTS to designing an improved range of services tailored to the different needs of all court-users.”

The initiative is an important first step in the modernisation of the civil justice system and begins to deliver the vision set out by Lord Briggs in his 2016 report on the structure of civil courts, where he called for claims

worth up to £25,000 to be solved in an online court. It is launched after a year of development with members of the judiciary, representatives from the advice and legal community and users, and will continue to be piloted while other aspects of an end-to-end online system are developed.

The move is part of the Government's £1 billion investment to modernise the court service, making it swifter, simpler, and easier to access for everyone. HMCTS is exploring how justice can best be served in the digital age.

Other examples of the Government's court reforms which are making access to justice easier for everyone include:

- A new service which allows people to submit their tax appeals online – drastically cutting the number of applications being returned as incomplete or inaccurate
- Launching the first divorce application services online – making the process easier to understand for divorce applicants and helping to progress applications
- A new paperless system, in operation at Lavender Hill Magistrates' Court, which means thousands of cases involving fare evasion are processed more swiftly and effectively.

[Press release: New boost to rogue landlord crackdown](#)

Rogue landlords who rent out substandard properties face being forced out of the sector as new banning orders are brought in and a national database of offenders goes live today (6 April 2018).

Landlords convicted of a range of housing, immigration and other criminal offences such as leasing overcrowded properties, fire and gas safety offences and unlawful eviction, will be put on the new database, so councils can share information between themselves and keep a closer eye on those with a poor track record.

The private rented sector houses 4.7 million households in England and the government is delivering these reforms under the [Housing and Planning Act 2016](#) so everyone has a safe and decent place to live.

Minister for Housing and Homelessness Heather Wheeler said:

I am committed to making sure people who are renting are living in safe and good quality properties. That's why we're cracking down on the small minority of landlords that are renting out unsafe and substandard accommodation.

Landlords should be in no doubt that they must provide decent homes or face the consequences.

The database will be available to use by councils to crackdown on poor and unfair practice in the private rented sector such as overcrowded, squalid or dangerous accommodation, and to help target their enforcement action.

Landlords convicted of offences under the government's new law may also be given banning orders preventing them from leasing accommodation for a period of time, ranging from 12 months to life. Councils must record details of any landlord or property agent who has received a banning order on the database. Landlords that ignore a banning order will face criminal sanctions including up to 6 months imprisonment and an unlimited fine.

The department will be able to use the database to publish regular updates on the number of landlords and agents who have been banned, convicted of a banning order offence or received two or more civil penalties, broken down by local authority area.

These measures follow the announcement that councils are also being given tough new powers to tackle the small minority of rogue landlords who rent out overcrowded properties and impose fines of up to £30,000 for those landlords who do not comply. Overcrowded and poor quality housing can result in excess noise, increased demand on local services such as waste collection and anti-social behaviour generally, which is why the government is determined to crack down on it.

Public safety is paramount which is why this government will support further measures proposed by Karen Buck MP in a Private Member's Bill to protect tenants in both the social and private rented sectors. This forms part of the government's plan to ensure a safer and stronger housing market that works for everyone.

The [Housing and Planning Act 2016](#) introduced a range of measures to tackle rogue landlords:

- civil penalties of up to £30,000 as an alternative to prosecution – came into force April 2017
- extension of Rent Repayment Orders to cover illegal eviction and/ or failure to comply with a statutory notice – came into force in April 2017. Rent Repayment Orders will also cover breach of a banning order from 6 April 2018.

Government has worked with Karen Buck MP to draft and publish the Private Member's Bill on [Homes \(Fitness for Human Habitation and Liability of Housing Standards\)](#).

The following guidance for local housing authorities has been published: