

Steven Jackson – Written evidence (FDF0011)

I am writing in connection with the work your committee are undertaking on digital fraud, which I heard about via BBC Radio4 ("Today" programme of Fri 8th April 2022, "Yesterday in Parliament" article). I am highlighting a fraudulent activity which appears to be "in the shadows" at present but which has affected quite a few people when you investigate.

During lockdown, we sold an item using EBay for circa £600. The buyer paid with a credit card (we don't know the company) via ebay's new payment service (no longer Paypal). We despatched the item via courier and they confirmed delivery – however, no signature was obtained because of the situation and "rules" during lockdown. All appeared to be OK until one month later (to the day) when we received an email from Ebay saying that we now owed them "seller's fees" equivalent to the price of the item (ie circa £600).

It transpired that the buyer had, on the 28th day after the transaction, claimed the cost back on his credit card using the "charge-back" scheme, stating that he "did not recognise the transaction". The credit card company had then reclaimed the money from ebay's payment service and they were now attempting to reclaim from us. At this point, we objected, providing all the evidence that the item had been despatched and delivered; however, Ebay have refused our appeal and are relying on the sole fact that no signature was obtained (and you'll note that the buyer did not claim the item hadn't been received, merely that they didn't recognise the transaction). We are now being pursued by a debt collection agency and have enlisted support from our MP but EBay have not responded to their contact.

The issue appears to be that it is simple for an individual to initiate the chargeback process and, seemingly, too easy for credit companies to side with the claimant (in this case without even investigating). Ebay are non-chalant and disinterested – they merely claim these are "seller's fees" and therefore we are required to pay under the terms we signed up to as a seller. As a legitimate private seller we seem to have very little recourse – and contacting ebay is extremely difficult so it is hard to speak to anyone. This type of fraud may not be as prevalent or complex as some you are investigating, but it is simple, straightforward and very difficult to defend against.

I trust I have provided you with sufficient detail and clarity to enable you to consider this type of fraud in addition to the other areas you are investigating. I would be happy to provide more information if you should require it

16 April 2022