

PROFiT

Prevention of Fraud in Travel

Press release

TRAVEL INDUSTRY WATCHDOG TACKLES VILLA FRAUD

The travel industry's fraud watchdog **Prevention of Fraud in Travel** ['PROFiT'] has today teamed up with the **City of London Police** and a number of the leading holiday home rental companies within the UK sector to work towards an industry standard for verifying owners and properties to reduce the risk of fraud to consumers.

The companies involved include; Direct Holiday Villas, Holiday Lettings, Holiday Home Rentals, Home Away Holiday-Rentals, Owners Direct, Perfect Getaways, Spain Holidays, Villa Plus, Villarenters.com, and Viva Stay.

The Group has set itself four areas to look at:

1. Fraud prevention work,
2. Fraud intelligence,
3. Enforcement work, and
4. Education.

At the first meeting the group produced an Industry Briefing Note on the sector to help editors and law enforcement bodies with the facts about the industry.

Barry Gooch Chairman of PROFiT said: "Working in conjunction with partners within the industry our aim is to dispel the myths surrounding this sector and instil confidence in how it operates. There is a lot of very good work being carried out across the industry, but it is not widely known about"

The Guidance note, including 12 tips for consumers, is attached.

Barry Gooch continued, "The vast majority of consumers enjoy a safe and happy holiday home rental at competitive prices from the industry the pity is that a few get caught out. We are now working with the reputable companies from this sector to minimise the problems for the future."

Further details on the work of PROFiT can be found at www.profit.uk.com

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Notes For Editors

1. PROFIT was launched at New Scotland Yard on the 20th February 2009 and is a coalition of travel industry partners working together to eliminate fraud in the travel industry. Working closely with the Metropolitan Police through its initiative Operation Sterling and the City of London Police, we have seen several successful convictions as well as a number of ongoing investigations.
2. The founder members of PROFIT are: ABTA Ltd, BA Plc, The CAA, Co-operative Travel, Davenport Lyons, Global Travel Group, Hays Travel Ltd, Teletext Ltd, Travel Trust Association.
3. To join the group villa companies must agree to implement the agreed standard which will include carrying out a minimum level of checks, to share information on properties they find out are bogus, and pay a small administration fee.
4. PROFIT is a not for profit organisation that works with the whole travel industry including guest houses, hotels, airlines, travel agents, tour operators, cruise companies, train operators and bus and coach bodies.