

We're still here to support loan shark victims

We are aware that COVID-19 has left some people struggling financially and loan sharks may look to take advantage of those who have found themselves in a vulnerable position and feel they have nowhere else to turn for help.

We are committed to helping victims of illegal money lending and providing support that is immediate, practical and tailored to their needs.

Our specialist team are still here to help 24/7, in the same way we always do. If you are concerned that a client, resident, or service user may be a victim of illegal money lending, you can make a referral to our services [here](#).



**We're still here to support
victims at this difficult time.**

0300 555 2222

Loan sharks are not your friend.

STOPLOANSHARKS
Intervention . Support . Education

Thank you to all our partners for their continued support. You are the eyes and ears of our communities and help us gather intelligence that will bring loan sharks to justice.

New online chat service launched for victims

Stop Loan Sharks have launched a new live chat service to provide extra advice and support to victims of illegal money lending.

We have helped over 30,000 people escape the clutches of loan sharks and have launched the live chat to make our services even more accessible to those who need them most.

We continue to provide round-the-clock information, advice and support for anyone affected by illegal money lending on our 24-hour helpline 0300 555 2222. You can also report a loan shark using our confidential [online form](#) or [email us](#).



The new service will initially be open between 9am and 5pm every Tuesday at www.stoploansharks.co.uk. When you click on the Live Chat icon, you will begin a one-on-one session with an expert support worker from the IMLT.

Chance to bid for loan sharks' seized cash

The England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) is cracking down on loan sharks across the country and stripping them of their ill-gotten gains under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) legislation.

The Stop Loan Sharks Community Fund is open again for bids from charities, voluntary organisations and community groups involved in activities that have a positive impact on their communities.

The Fund is made up of money seized from convicted loan sharks, which is made available to groups through a bidding process and grants are awarded to successful applicants.



Citizens Advice Plymouth POCA mural

Each group will be able to apply for a grant of up to £5,000 for their project that meets the IMLT eligibility criteria.

For more details on how to apply for a POCA grant, visit our [website](#).

Facebook Live Q&A sessions hailed a success

The Stop Loan Sharks weekly live question and answer sessions on Facebook have been hailed a success, reaching more than 7,000 people and counting.

We have received a fantastic response with lots of questions asked about loan sharks and the support available to victims. Other topics have included credit unions, POCA and the benefits of partnership working.

The public have the option to send a private message to us if they wish to remain anonymous, or they can simply post the question in the comments section during the live broadcast.



The short half-hour Q&A sessions are held every Friday from 2:30pm on the Stop Loan Sharks [Facebook Page](#).

12th June - Scams Awareness Month

We encourage people to report and talk about scams.

19th June - Men's Health Week

We discuss financial stress and wellness.

Stay tuned for our new podcast series

Stop Loan Sharks are launching a new podcast series to raise awareness and increase understanding of loan sharks, how they operate, and the important role our partners play in tackling illegal money lending.

The podcast discusses education and awareness-raising campaigns such as Operation Grippled and Cheltenham Says No. It also features interviews with specialist IMLT staff and partners agencies who are helping the fight against loan sharks.

Loan shark victim Becky also shares her agonising story to encourage others to come forward and seek support.

Your Money and Your Life

Podcast



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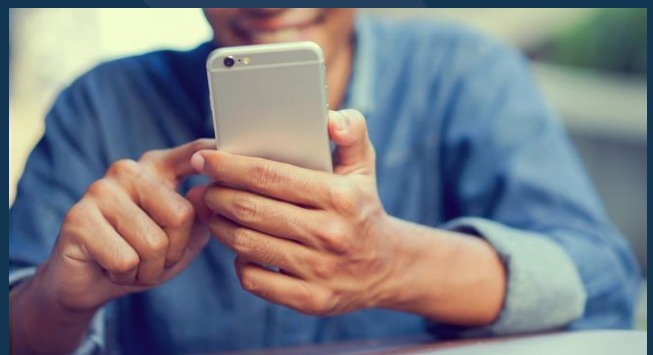
Keep your eyes (and ears) peeled for the launch of our new five-part podcast series *'Your Money and Your Life'* coming soon.

Stop Loan Sharks reporting app coming soon

Stop Loan Sharks are launching a new smartphone app next month to make it easier for people to report illegal money lending and access support services.

The new app, which will be free to download and available on both Apple and Android platforms, will help increase reporting even further, boost confidence, and help victims get the support they need.

We want to make reporting as easy and accessible as possible. The app offers appropriate advice and information to those victims requiring emotional support and confidential debt advice.



Please share this news with your colleagues and partners and encourage them to download the app next month.

Other features include signposting to local credit unions, push notifications about latest arrests and convictions and access to partner resources such as our publicity pack and case studies.

Online training available during COVID-19

With lockdown still in place and our LIAISE team working from home, we are now offering free online training sessions for partner agencies.

Loan sharks could be having a detrimental impact financially, physically and emotionally on your clients, tenants and services users.

The sessions will cover a host of areas aimed at raising awareness of the role participants can play in spotting the signs of illegal money lending.

It is important to protect those who are vulnerable to being targeted by loan sharks and partners need to be aware of the signs and what to look out for.



If you are interested in signing up to an online session, please contact your local LIAISE officer or fill out our [contact form](#) and we will be in touch.

The sessions are free of charge and usually last an hour. Participants will receive a link to join the training session.

New animation to help people spot loan sharks

Stop Loan Sharks have released a new [animation](#) to help people spot the signs of illegal money lending and avoid falling victim to loan sharks. You can watch our animations and case study videos on [YouTube](#).

We have a range of free campaign materials that you can use to inform and educate people in your community about the dangers of loan sharks.

You can download our leaflets, posters and social media toolkit on our [website](#).



Our financial education resources are packed with videos and fun activities to help teach children about the importance of managing their money and why they should never consider using a loan shark when they grow up.

Download the packs for free [here](#).

Working with Credit Unions to promote savings

Credit unions work to benefit their members, helping to provide communities with affordable loans and savings products.

The Stop Loan Sharks team promote credit unions as a responsible, affordable, financial alternative to high-cost credit and loan sharks.

The IMLT encourages people to join credit unions, in order to save regularly or enable them to obtain legal, affordable loans, when emergencies arise.

We also use proceeds of crime money as an incentive to encourage people to save, and to raise awareness of the dangers of borrowing from illegal money lenders.



We have paid **£167,650** into credit union accounts over the last four years and driven over 6,500 accounts for the credit union sector.

We currently work in partnership with 110 Credit Unions across England. If you are interested in working with our team, why not **get in touch** with us?

Thank you to all our partners for their hard work during this very difficult time.

You can stay up-to-date with the latest loan shark news and campaigns by following us on social media.

