

Newton Abbot loan shark sent back to prison



JAILED: Paul Stretch

Loan shark Paul Stretch has been sent back to prison after it was revealed he was still lending money and collecting his extortionate payments whilst on bail.

He carried on his illegal money lending business as if nothing had happened from the day of his initial arrest in 2016 until he was jailed for the first time in August 2017.

Mr Stretch was jailed for 27 months at Exeter Crown Court on August 18, 2017, after a judge described his interest rates as 'swingeing'.

Simon Mortimer, prosecuting, said that Mr Stretch made 18 new loans during this period and collected over £14,000 from customers.

Further investigation revealed that Stretch's wife Mandy had continued the business and made seven new loans for £6,500 while her husband was in jail, receiving £9,000 in total repayments.

The loan records were found during simultaneous searches of two addresses on April 10, 2018.

Officers from the England Illegal Money Lending Team recovered £5,123 cash from a safe found at the Twickenham Road home. Loan records were also found hidden in a pillow case at a house in Torquay.

The couple were storing and disposing paperwork away from their home as a deliberate and sophisticated effort to evade future investigations, a court heard.

Paul Stretch, aged 60, and Mandy, aged 48, from Newton Abbot, both admitted illegal money lending and two counts of money laundering.

He was jailed for two years and three months and she was sentenced for ten months, suspended for two years, by Recorder Mr Martin Meeke, QC, at Exeter Crown Court on 18 April.

The judge told them: 'You knew perfectly well that your money lending activities were a criminal offence but despite that Paul Stretch continued the illegal business while on bail.

'You were careful in hiding your records away and making entries which were false and deceptive. It was calculating conduct. This is activity which must be met by deterrent sentences.'

Chesterfield illegal money lender told to repay £230k

An illegal money lender has been told to pay back more than £230,000 of criminal ill-gotten gains he made from vulnerable customers.

Andrew Gent, 50, from Wingerworth, was ordered to pay back £231,250 from his proceeds of crime following a confiscation hearing at Derby Crown Court.

He was previously sentenced to eight months in prison, suspended for 18 months in July, 2018, after pleading guilty to illegal money lending and money laundering between the period of June 2015 and November 2017. Gent was also given a six-month curfew and 150 hours of unpaid work.

Thornton loan shark jailed after pocketing £300k



JAILED: Keith Riley

A loan shark has been jailed for nine months after he pocketed more than £300,000 by charging friends and work colleagues up to 50 per cent interest on loans.

Keith Riley, 56, from Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire, admitted illegal money lending and money laundering at a previous hearing at Preston Crown Court.

One victim ended up repaying £15,310 on an £8,500 loan, the court heard.

The England Illegal Money Lending Team working in partnership with Lancashire County Council Trading Standards and Lancashire Constabulary executed a warrant at Riley's flat on 23 January after receiving a tip-off to its 24/7 hotline.

During the search, officers found records identifying 35 regular borrowers and £305,778 in loan repayments.

Prosecutor Simon Mortimer said Riley had been operating as an illegal money lender for four years since January 2015.

Recorder Stanley Reiz described Riley's operation as "unsophisticated lending to colleagues and friends, with profit over four years and charging high interest rates."

The recorder ordered Riley to pay back £61,100 under Proceeds of crime (POCA) within three months or face a further year in jail.

Coventry loan shark jailed and stripped of assets

Loan shark Colin Devereux was sentenced to 22 months in prison after pleading guilty to two counts of illegal money lending at Coventry Crown Court in August.

He was also stripped of his ill-gotten gains under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) as he was ordered to pay back £100,000 within three months or face an extra 12 months in prison.

Devereux, aged 52, of Wood End, was arrested in December 2018 following a warrant by the England Illegal Money Lending Team working in partnership with Coventry City Council and West Midlands Police.

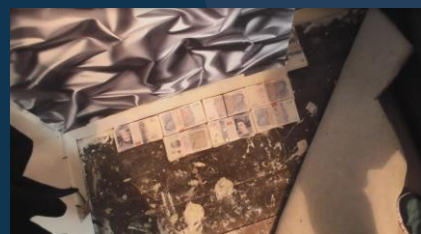
During the search investigators recovered more than 100 loan records which presented names, outstanding balances, repayments and top-ups.

£9,000 in cash was also found stashed inside kitchen drawers and under the defendant's bedroom carpet.

Devereux had been involved in the operation of an illegal money lending business since August 2011. It is estimated that he would have received £154,000 in repayments if he collected from all his customers in that period.



JAILED: Colin Devereux



Dudley man sentenced for £340k illegal loans business

A Black Country illegal money lender who pocketed £340,000 over six years from vulnerable customers has been sentenced.

John Guest, 63, from Upper Gornal, Dudley, admitted two charges of unlawful money lending, another of concealing or removing criminal property and also possessing criminal property at an earlier hearing.

Prosecutor Joe Millington said Guest had worked as a self-employed agent for various doorstep loan companies for over 20 years before moving into unlawful money lending.

The unlicensed loans activity took place between July 2012 and August last year, with Guest using some of the old company payment books to provide loans to customers.

He took advantage of his reputation of being a legitimate lender to identify previous customers for his own financial gain, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Guest issued more than 270 loans ranging from £100 to £3,000 to 58 borrowers, charging them interest of between 50 – 100 per cent and consistently topping up loans to increase his profit margins. The majority of victims were paying off two or more loans at the same time.

In April 2018, the England Illegal Money Lending Team received a report that Guest had been providing illegal loans in the guise of an authorised loan company to make his business look legitimate.

Officers from the team, in conjunction with Dudley Council Trading Standards and West Midlands Police, executed a warrant at Guest's home in August 2018.



Cash found in a safe

During a search they recovered customer agreements and payments books containing details of loans issued and collections. A total of £18,240 was also found inside a safe.

Guest was sentenced to 22 months imprisonment, suspended for 18 months, and ordered to do 80 hours unpaid work.

Passing sentence, Judge Kershaw said: "Money lending has to be highly regulated because if it isn't people suffer terribly. You had a large customer base and manipulated paperwork.

"The cash found at your premises was substantial which was indicative to the nature of the business and profit you was earning.

"Your customers had multiple loans which is a serious consequence for people as they become trapped in money lending debt."

Guest has also been ordered to pay back all his available assets to the court under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

He must pay back £134,225 within three months or face two years in prison.

Man ordered to forfeit £45,000 and jewellery under POCA

The IMLT has secured a forfeiture order under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) against a man from Middlesbrough.

The 50 year-old was ordered to forfeit £45,820.00 and two diamond rings which were seized during an illegal money lending warrant that was executed in September 2018.

He was also ordered to pay £600.00 compensation to a victim.

Teesside Magistrates' Court granted the forfeiture order in respect of the assets after it was decided that the cash and jewellery were either obtained from crime and/or intended to be used for unlawful conduct.

Crewe loan shark who traded illicit tobacco products jailed for 30 months



JAILED: Vincent Hamilton

The England Illegal Money Lending Team working in partnership with Cheshire East Council Trading Standards and Cheshire Constabulary, have secured another successful prosecution against an illegal money lender who was also trading in illicit tobacco products.

Vincent Hamilton, 56, of Crewe, pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing to several offences, including illegal money lending, money laundering and selling illegal tobacco products he had purchased abroad and which did not carry obligatory government health warnings.

He was jailed for 30 months at Chester Crown Court on Friday, 23 August.

During a search of Hamilton's home in November 2018, officers found illicit cigarettes and tobacco with a retail value of £8,116 and cash totalling £7,580.

Hamilton, who had been lending money illegally since 2012, had built up a network of 31 clients, with debts totalling £38,000 for which he charged 30 per cent interest.

Hamilton was told by the judge that he had been motivated by greed.

A Proceeds of Crime timetable was set to recoup any money that Hamilton made from his criminality.

IMLT feature on A Matter of Life and Debt

BBC audiences will have spotted a familiar face on TV recently as mascot Sid the Shark featured in the latest series of 'A Matter of Life and Debt'.

The England Illegal Money Lending Team were in Leicester raising awareness of the dangers of loan sharks and signposting people to Clockwise Credit Union as an ethical alternative for savings and loans.

The episode also featured stories of members whose lives have been transformed by a credit union loan.

Tony Quigley, head of the England IMLT said: "We're thrilled to have been featured on another documentary series. Credit unions offer a real lifeline for some people enabling them to access safe and legitimate financial services, helping to reduce the risk of people going to illegal money lenders."



Sid the Shark made an appearance in Leicester

Credit unions offer non-profit financial savings and loans to local communities. Find your nearest credit union [here](#).

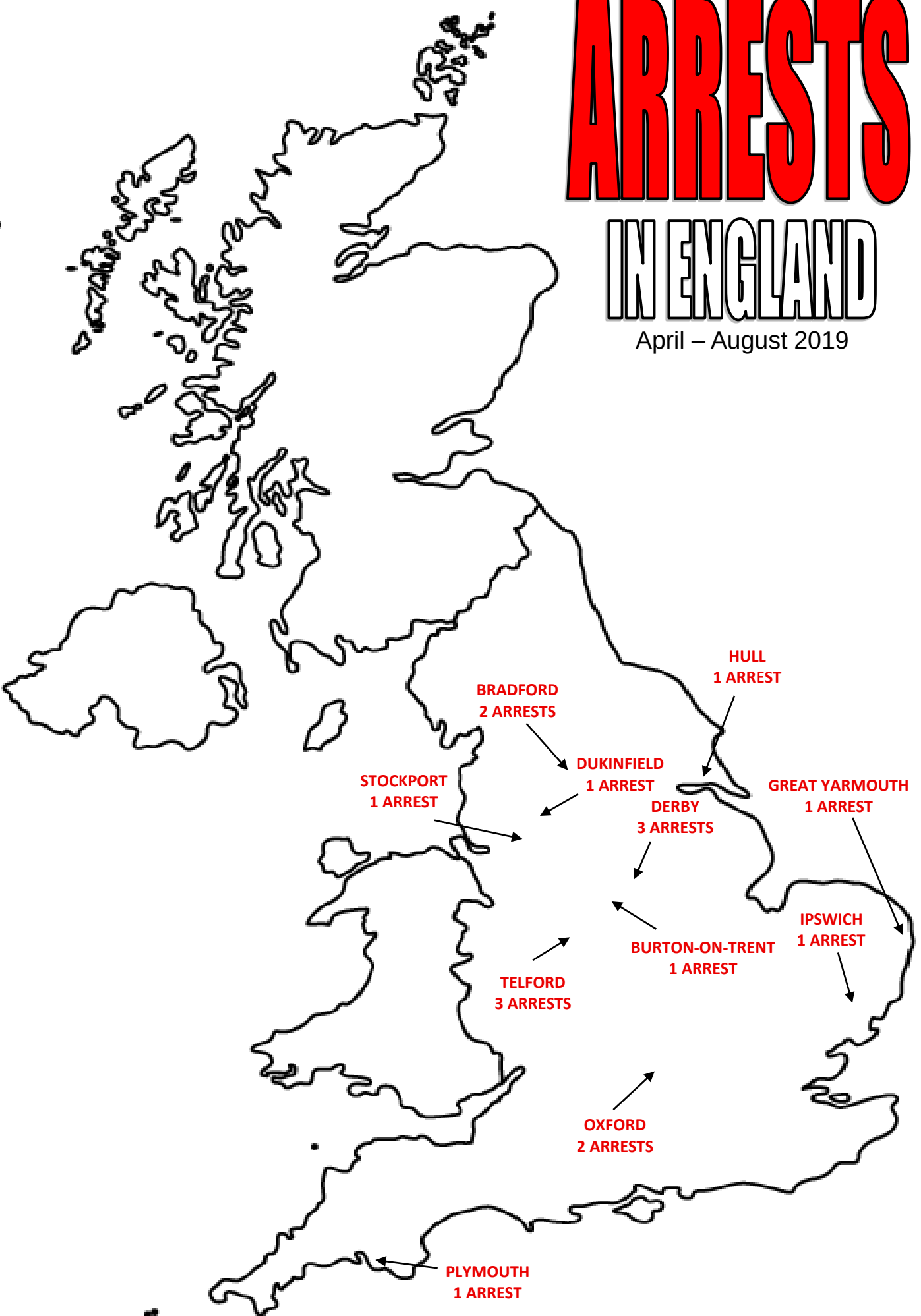
The IMLT have released a new animation to raise awareness of loan sharks and promote credit unions as a safer alternative. [Watch it on YouTube](#).

Report a loan shark
Call the 24/7 hotline 0300 555 2222

ARRESTS

IN ENGLAND

April – August 2019



STOP LOAN SHARKS

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IMLT MAKE HEADLINES...



DevonLive

Newton Abbot loan shark couple stripped of their assets

DevonLive
27th August

StokeonTrentLive

'You were motivated by greed...' - Meet the loan shark who charged victims 30% interest (and now he's behind bars)

Stoke Sentinel
27th August

Oxford Mail

Suspected loan sharks arrested in Abingdon

Oxford Mail
13th August

The Mirror
5th September

Telegraph & Argus

Two suspected loan sharks arrested after raids in Wilsden, Keighley and Haworth

The Telegraph & Argus
9th July

World

Runcorn police pick up national award for loan shark awareness campaign

Runcorn and Widnes News
10th July

GloucestershireLive

Keeping tenants away from the jaws of loan sharks

Gloucestershire Live
22nd May



BBC III Gotten Gains
9th July

MKCITIZEN

Community bites back against dodgy loan sharks in Milton Keynes

Milton Keynes Citizen
12th August

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Loan shark victim receives hero award for bravery

A loan shark victim who was driven to the brink of suicide has been awarded the CTSI Brian Smith Hero Award by the **Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)** for his courage and bravery throughout his harrowing ordeal.

Matthew, whose name has been changed to protect his identity, initially took out a small loan in desperation after giving up work to care for his sick wife. The debts quickly rose as he struggled to make extortionate repayments, and he soon found himself in thousands of pounds worth of debt to unscrupulous illegal money lenders.

Besieged and intimidated by loan sharks in his own home, and under constant threat of violence, Matthew spiralled into depression and almost took his own life. Instead, Matthew contacted the England Illegal Money Lending Team, and his evidence and support led to a successful prosecution.

Having since moved on, Matthew has spoken out about his experience, undertaking media appearances to raise awareness of the risks of loan sharks. His story has been shared across the UK prison network to help prisoners and families avoid illegal lenders.

The CTSI Hero Awards celebrate those who make outstanding contributions towards consumer protection in our communities. Matthew received his award at the CTSI Hero Awards 2019 ceremony.

The CTSI Brian Smith Hero Award is named in honour of the late Brian Smith, a CTSI Lead Officer who sadly passed away in 2017.



Tony Quigley, Head of the England Illegal Money Lending Team, said:

“We are grateful to all the brave victims who have shared their stories to raise awareness and help others.

“Matthew has shown tremendous courage throughout this terrifying ordeal. His bravery and actions during the investigation led to the arrest and conviction of the unscrupulous loan sharks. We appreciate his continued support of the team and congratulate him on this fantastic achievement.”

[Watch Matthew's Story on YouTube.](#)

Illegal Money Lending safeguard partnership wins national award

A campaign to raise awareness of the perils of using loan sharks in Runcorn has won a national award.

Operation Grippled, a three-way partnership, received this year's prestigious Outstanding Trading Standards Initiative Hero Award from the CTSI.

Runcorn Policing Team has been working alongside Halton Council Trading Standards and The England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) to educate communities about the risks of illegal money lending and highlight safer borrowing methods to help prevent the use of loan sharks.

Campaign successes included Spot the Shark social media competition that reached over 64,000 people and a Christmas card design competition with local schools.



Sandymoor High School students also produced a profile raising, imaginative stop motion Lego animation to increase awareness of loan sharks. [Watch it here.](#)

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Burton loan shark victims urged to come forward

The England Illegal Money Lending Team working in conjunction with Staffordshire County Council Trading Standards and Staffordshire Police executed warrants in Burton-on-Trent in July this year.

Cash, documentation and electronic devices were seized following raids at two properties in the town. Officers also recovered a large quantity of passports and European identity cards during searches of the addresses.

A 34-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of illegal money lending, money laundering and unlawful possession of identification documents as part of the operation.

The known victims are understood to be Eastern European nationals - mainly Bulgarian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian and Slovakian.



Following the raids, an Open Day Event was held in August in the Burton upon Trent area for potential victims of illegal money lending to collect their documents and property.

Anyone wanting to report a loan shark can call the 24-hour confidential hotline on **0300 555 2222**, text a report to **07860022116** or visit the [website](#).

The suspect has been released under investigation pending further enquiries.

New multi-agency group protects residents from financial abuse and loan sharks

The England Illegal Money Lending Team has joined forces with local agencies to protect vulnerable people from being targeted and exploited by loan sharks.

The Torbay Financial Awareness Group was set up so organisations could share information to protect individuals at risk of financial abuse and take action against the perpetrators who prey on the vulnerable and elderly.

The group includes organisations such as Torbay Council, Devon and Cornwall Police, Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust, Age UK and more.

"It's our priority to protect communities from illegal money lending and this new partnership helps by ensuring vital information is shared between the necessary organisations and robust action is taken against unscrupulous loan sharks" said Tony Quigley, Head of IMLT.



The group has been raising awareness of the issue of illegal money lending across Torbay, providing training for frontline workers and local residents, placing banners in prominent locations and organising a social media campaign.

An estimated 310,000 households are borrowing from illegal money lenders across the UK and the highest interest seen to date was equivalent to 4.5 million per cent APR.

Join the fight and help us eradicate loan sharks in communities!
[Get in touch](#) to find out how to get involved



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Stop Loan Sharks Champions Awards WINNERS



Cheshire Police – Operation Grippled

A team of officers at Runcorn Local Policing Unit who set up a project to raise awareness of the dangers of using loan sharks have won a prestigious national award.

The initiative – known as Operation Grippled – received the Outstanding Trading Standards Initiative Hero Award from the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) and Stop Loan Sharks Champions Award.

The project was ran by PC Ian Hampson and PCSO Georgina Griffiths who worked alongside Halton Council Trading Standards and Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT).

Together they have educated communities about the risks of illegal money lending and highlighted safer borrowing methods to help prevent the use of loan sharks.

In a short space of time the project has received a number of successes including the launch of a social media 'Spot the Shark' competition, which reached over 64,000 users, engaged with local schools to take part in a competition to design a Christmas card as well as producing a profile raising and imaginative Lego animation.



Holmer Lake School & Just Credit Union

Staff and pupils at Holmer Lake Primary School in Telford are celebrating after being named National Champions of the Stop Loan Sharks Awards.

The hotly contested award recognises the school's prolonged campaign warning children about the dangers of falling prey to loan sharks when they grow up, and promoting alternative methods of borrowing to the community.

The award to the school was in conjunction with Just Credit Union, Shropshire's not-for-profit community bank, as a result of a joint project aimed at raising awareness of loan sharks.

The extra funding will be used on initiatives such as engagement with pupils and parents to highlight the dangers of illegal lenders and encouragement for families to join the credit union – with cash incentives for those who continue to save.



Cheltenham Borough Homes

The work of Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH) has again been recognised by the IMLT being awarded the Stop Loan Sharks Champions Award for the second year running.

The 'Cheltenham Says No' campaign is keeping tenants away from the jaws of loan sharks.

Read more about the campaign on Page 13.



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Stop Loan Sharks Champions Awards

HIGHLY COMMENDED



Radio Northumberland

Radio Northumberland received a highly commended award for its anti-loan shark song written by local poet and punk band Cherry & Peesh. The song was aired across local radio receiving large download and streaming figures. Additionally the band performed the song at the prestigious Rebellion festival. [Listen to the song on YouTube.](#)



Citizens Advice Havant Work Out Your Money

Citizens Advice Havant 'Work Out Your Money' team received a highly commended award for their interactive workshops featuring the IMLT education packs in schools around the Havant area. The team also produced resources for students to take the lesson work home, thus delivering the anti-loan shark message to parents and guardians.



Headway Swindon

Headway Swindon is a charity that supports adults with traumatic and acquired brain injury and their families and carers.

The charity received national recognition for its special sea-life inspired project which raises awareness of the dangers of loan sharks visually and helps protect clients with cognitive difficulties from falling victim to unscrupulous lenders.



East Sussex Credit Union (ESCU)

East Sussex Credit Union has received special recognition for its campaign to highlight the perils of illegal money lending.

The Credit Union ran several anti-loan shark road shows which involved going into community centres and schools to teach adults and children of all ages about the dangers of loan sharks and encourage families to join ESCU.



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Stop Loan Sharks Champions Awards

HIGHLY COMMENDED



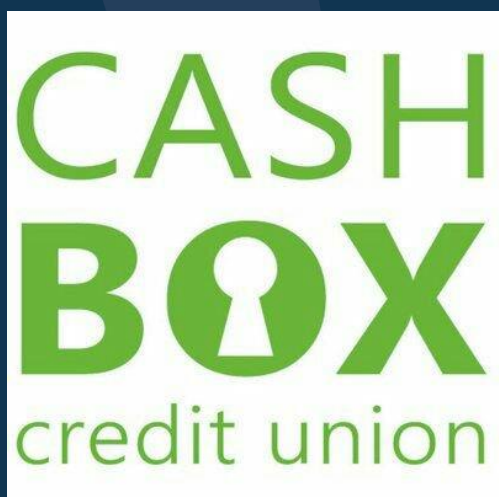
Bauer Media Newcastle & Darlington Building Society

Bauer Media have been highly commended for their awareness and education project where students devised their own radio advert to raise awareness of illegal money lending and warn against the dangers of loan sharks. The project culminated in the production of a radio commercial that was aired on local radio and listened to by over 200,000 people.



Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts

Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts received a highly commended award for their community engagement project which involved raising awareness of the dangers of loan sharks and promoting the Credit Union as a safer alternative on the Gamesley estate.



Cash Box Credit Union

Cash Box Credit Union received a highly commended award for raising awareness of the dangers of loan sharks amongst the Tameside Armed Services Community. They also set up a savings scheme at a school in Stalybridge encouraging children to save regularly and develop their knowledge and skills in financial capability.

The England Illegal Money Lending Team use ill-gotten cash seized from loan sharks under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) to support local initiatives that help prevent crime and protect communities against illegal money lending.

During 2018/19 the team granted £141,269 for 37 crime-busting initiatives.

The projects raise awareness of illegal money lending, prevent crime and disorder in communities and encourage reporting of loan sharks by signposting victims to the team.

Community groups, voluntary organisations and social enterprises can apply for up to £5,000 to spend on a project that meets the IMLT criteria.

The next round of funding will reopen in April 2020.

[Sign up here](#) to receive alerts about funding opportunities.

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Community bites back against loan sharks in Milton Keynes

The England Illegal Money Lending Team has recently delivered a week-long campaign in Milton Keynes to bite back against loan sharks.

The IMLT, in conjunction with police, MK Council and Safer MK, worked with Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council to hold information stands and events.

Officers from the IMLT and Milton Keynes North Neighbourhood Policing Team took part in a targeted leaflet drop in Beanhill, Netherfield and Tinkers Bridge areas to show residents the work being done and point to help if needed.

Police were also trained on how to spot loan sharks and make referrals to the IMLT when dealing with vulnerable victims.



Mascots PCSO Peel & Sid the Shark

The joint approach allows the organisations to share information to bring loan sharks to justice.

Harmful Gambling Summit held in Birmingham

The England Illegal Money Lending co-hosted the 'Problem Gambling: Tackling gambling related harm summit', alongside the Birmingham Financial Inclusion Partnership, on 27 February 2019.

The event which was held at Birmingham Council House was attended by around 100 industry professionals, city front-line workers, researchers and prevention specialists to examine the issue of problem gambling from a variety of perspectives.

Tony Quigley, head of the Illegal Money Lending Team discussed recent cases involving loan sharks preying on gamblers at casinos.



A subgroup has been formed to work with the gambling commission to look at the impact of gambling related problems.

Redbridge Council joins the fight against loan sharks

The London Borough of Redbridge have joined the fight to tackle illegal money lending across communities in the area.

Various teams and departments received Enhanced Awareness Training delivered at the Town Hall Council Chambers including Trading Standards, Enforcement & Community Safety, Licensing and Tenancy Sustainment.

The informative training covers the signs to look out for as a frontline worker and how to recognise the symptoms and effects of illegal money lending when dealing with customers.

The Council have actively promoted the Stop Loan Sharks message to residents, tenants and leaseholders across the borough. Awareness materials have also been disseminated across their intranet and plasma screens in local offices and the Town Hall.

The England Illegal Money Lending Team offers free awareness training on loan sharks – illegal lenders who could be having a detrimental impact financially, physically and emotionally on your clients and service users.

For more information visit the [website](#).

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Cheltenham Borough Homes Campaign Keeping tenants away from the jaws of loan sharks

The Cheltenham Borough Homes campaign is helping residents avoid the pitfalls of illegal money lenders such as those in the recent Coronation Street storyline.

Over the summer, audiences of the ITV soap followed the story of Gary Windass, who borrowed money from dangerous loan shark Rick Neelan. Gary found himself owing thousands of pounds to Rick and struggled to meet his increasingly extortionate demands.

Unfortunately these scenes in the ITV soap aren't restricted to our TV screens, with an estimated 310,000 households in the UK borrowing from loan sharks every year.

In Cheltenham, social housing provider Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH) is leading the fight against loan sharks with the 'Cheltenham Says No' campaign.

The award-winning campaign first launched in 2017 and was funded by a grant from the England Illegal Money Lending Team who have worked closely with CBH since 2012. During the first phase of the campaign, Cheltenham was blanketed in posters and flyers raising awareness of the risks of dealing with loan sharks.



Other awareness activities included a high profile door-to-door campaign to reassure residents and share the advice, including visits from the 'Stop Loan Sharks' campaign mascot 'Sid the Shark'.

Since then CBH has been covering its fleet of vans in eye catching designs featuring wolf eyes to help spread the word and help 'Keep the wolf from the door' with several more vans lined up to feature a new image in the coming weeks.

The work of CBH has again been recognised by the IMLT. They have been awarded the Stop Loan Sharks Champions Award for the second year running.

Students get animated to raise awareness of the dangers of loan sharks

High school students have been learning about the dangers of loan sharks to keep them safe from illegal money lending in the future.

The England Illegal Money Lending Team and Runcorn Police officers have been educating young people on the topic through stop motion animations.

Widnes-based animation company Mako, has been working with pupils at Sandymoor High School in Runcorn to teach them how to create imaginative Lego animations focusing on the dangers of illegal money lending and loan sharks.

It is hoped that the animations will now be used to educate other pupils at schools across the town.



The scheme has been funded by B&M and forms part of an ongoing initiative by PC Ian Hampson and PCSO Georgia Griffiths.

Watch the animation on [YouTube](#).

STOP LOAN SHARKS

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Wolverhampton backs charter to stop loan sharks

Organisations across Wolverhampton have teamed up to pledge a zero-tolerance stance on loan sharks.

The England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) and local charity Transforming Communities Together, have brought together a range of local groups to sign an anti-loan shark charter to stop unscrupulous lenders taking advantage of vulnerable people.

The charter was launched at an event by the IMLT. The event provided an opportunity for organisations such as Black Country DWP, City of Wolverhampton Council, Citizens Advice Wolverhampton, Diocese of Lichfield, Just Finance Foundation, St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton City Credit Union and Wolverhampton Homes to find out more about the issue and spot illegal money lending in communities.

It is now hoped the charter will start a conversation about loan sharks in a bid to reach those who are at risk.



Local agencies sign anti-loan shark pledge

The IMLT is also training frontline staff on what signs to look out for and how to recognise the symptoms and effects of illegal money lending when dealing with customers.

Loan sharks operate illegally without the correct permissions from the Financial Conduct Authority. These criminals usually appear friendly at first but quickly trap their borrowers into spiralling debt.

Biting back against loan sharks in Westcountry

A credit union has joined forces with the England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) to warn against the dangers of borrowing from loan sharks.

IMLT national mascot 'Sid the Shark' visited the Westcountry Savings and Loans head office in Portishead to talk about the dangers of loan sharks and how to help drive them out of the region.

The national team encourages residents to join credit unions, in order to save regularly or enable them to obtain legal, affordable loans when emergencies arise and help keep more people out of the clutches of loan sharks.

Westcountry is the South West's largest credit union - a member-owned, not-for-profit savings and loans organisation where any profit generated is paid to savers as an annual dividend. Credit unions aim to help people avoid high interest lenders by providing affordable loans, using funds deposited by other members who are saving.



Despite success earlier this year with two notable convictions in Newton Abbot, there is still a job to do. Tony Quigley, Head of the IMLT explains "Loan sharks operate across all communities. These unscrupulous individuals target the vulnerable and make money persecuting those who can least afford it. As a society we need to protect those at risk and ensure illegal money lending is a thing of the past. Credit Unions are a huge part of the solution by offering affordable, responsible loans, they give people who need a little extra help from time to time, a safe and reliable option."



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TOP TWEETS!

Wolverhampton Homes @WolvesHomes · Mar 12
We were proud to join other local groups on 11th March for the #StopLoanSharks charter signing. If you need to access additional funds, use a lender that you can trust - @wccul. ^SE
wolverhamptonhomes.org.uk/aboutus/news/1...



David Keane @CheshirePCC · Mar 21
Great to meet students from @SandymoorYear9 in #Runcorn who have been making their own animations to raise awareness of loan sharks.
A fantastic project from @PoliceRuncorn and @LoanSharkNews to protect our communities from illegal money lending #hereforyou #stoploansharks



Cheltenham Borough Homes @CheltBoroHomes · Jun 19
Today we received a 'fin-tastic' national award from the Illegal Money Lending Team England @LoanSharkNews for our campaign to keep the sharks away.
Find out more about how we're working to #StopLoanSharks here: gloucestershirelive.co.uk/special-featur...



Loan Smart @LoanSmartUK · Sep 9
Great work by the England Illegal Money Lending Team! To report a loan shark, call the 24-hour confidential hotline 0300 555 2222 or visit @LoanSharkNews



"Illegal money lenders prey on vulnerable people and blight communiti..."

D&C Police Cyber @DC_CyberProtect · Aug 22
Always fin-tastic to see this guy! 🐬 And excited to be collaborating with the Illegal Money Lending Team at future events throughout #Devon and #Cornwall.
#CyberProtect #StopLoanSharks #IMLT #FCA



Berkshire CU @BerkshireCU · Aug 14
Loan sharks circling our doorsteps. Visit your local #CreditUnion for ethical savings and loans. #Berkshire #SayNoToLoansSharks @LoanSharkNews



Suspected loan sharks arrested in Oxfordshire sting
A 41-year-old woman and 55-year-old man have been arrested on suspicion

Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit – Update

Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit (WIMLU) joined forces with Smart Money Cymru Credit Union Ltd to highlight its loan product as an alternative to borrowing from illegal or high interest money lenders.

Smart Money Cymru Credit Union, based in Caerphilly, is a financial co-operative that provides a safe secure place to save and borrow; they are owned by the people who use their services, and not by external shareholders or investors. Credit unions encourage members to save, and offer a range of saving options including Christmas savings accounts and junior savers' accounts.

Credit unions offer loan products suited to the member's individual need at an affordable rate; they often offer smaller, shorter term loans that many banks simply don't – and for which other lenders charge very high interest rates.

Andrina Davies Smart Money Cymru's General Manager said "working with the Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit has helped Smart Money Cymru develop an attractive and informative leaflet which highlights the difference of borrowing from various sources and advertises the benefit of borrowing from a credit union"



Over a two month period each household within the Caerphilly Borough received the cartoon style leaflet outlining three different borrowing scenarios, each with different outcomes. The aim was to encourage people to move away from borrowing from illegal money lenders and highlight the alternative options available to them.

The information leaflet was launched in April 2019 at the Phillpstown School Fete. The launch event and leaflet and distribution costs were paid for with money confiscated from loan sharks via the Proceed of Crime Act.

Stop Loan Sharks Northern Ireland – Update

Sharks at Balmoral Show!

Attendees at Balmoral Show, perhaps more accustomed to cattle and sheep, got more than they bargained for when they encountered “Sid the Shark” at the StopLoanSharks NI exhibition stand!

The Consumer Council's Illegal Money Lending and Financial Services Team were in attendance at the show talking to the general public about the dangers of illegal money lending.

Many of those who stopped by the stand indicated that they were familiar, either directly or indirectly, with this issue and all voiced support for the aims of the campaign.



The team has recently launched a new website
www.stoploansharksni.org.uk