

# Happy birthday to us! Partners mark 20<sup>th</sup> year of Stop Loan Sharks



In September, Stop Loan Sharks reached its landmark 20<sup>th</sup> birthday and we marked the occasion by holding a big event to thank partners for their support over the years.

Called Looking Back, Moving Forward, the event gave us an opportunity to look at what we have achieved over the past two decades and what the future holds for the team.

We heard from Tony Quigley, who has been at the helm of the IMLT since it started back in September 2004, and who has played a huge role in shaping the successful team it is today.

He is in the process of handing the reins to Dave Benbow, who has the task of leading the team into the next phase, continuing the fight to tackle the scourge of illegal lending across the country.

Dave told how the face of illegal lending was changing at a rapid pace and how he plans to ensure the team is ready to adapt and change to stay one step ahead of the loan sharks.

Hafsha Shaikh, from Smartlyte, then gave a presentation about how her community organisation has worked closely with Stop Loan Sharks over the years to get families talking about money and staying safe from illegal lenders.

Finally, we heard from a case management officer from Barnsley, who delivered a hard-hitting story of how his tenacity and perseverance helped save a vulnerable mother and son from the clutches of a violent, predatory loan shark. He and his colleagues went on to help the Stop Loan Sharks Team build a water-tight case against the loan shark, who was ultimately locked up for seven years.

We are privileged to be able to work with so many frontline partners across England who are all doing everything they can to help us in the fight against loan sharks.

We are a national team, and we rely on these partners to be our eyes and ears in the close-knit communities they work in, where loan sharks can lurk. It was great to see so many of those partners at our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary event, many of whom had travelled a long way to be with us on the day.

Their dedication and commitment to helping us Stop Loan Sharks is incredible and we were delighted to be able to show how grateful we are for their ongoing support.



*Partners snapping selfies with Sid the Shark at the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event*



## Loan shark jailed for 31 months – and made subject to IMLT’s first Criminal Behaviour Order

A 38-year-old man who operated as a loan shark in the Coventry area was sentenced to 31 months in prison and handed a Criminal Behaviour Order in a first for the national Illegal Money Lending Team.

James Ringrose lent thousands of pounds to people charging ‘exorbitant’ interest rates and putting pressure on them to make them pay, Warwick Crown Court heard. He left borrowers feeling distraught and even suicidal as they struggled to pay him back.

Ringrose admitted two charges of illegal money lending and money laundering following an investigation by the England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) and

appeared before the court to be sentenced on Friday, October 18. After an initial investigation by the IMLT, Ringrose was arrested at an address in Barons Croft, Nuneaton. He was bailed but the court heard he continued to provide and collect on unauthorised loans. In July 2024, he was arrested again following a warrant at an address in The Barley Lea, Coventry.

The Criminal Behaviour Order was imposed for five years, which means he must not enter the Stoke Aldermoor area of Coventry and not provide or collect unauthorised loans, directly or indirectly. If he breaches the order he could face a further jail term.



Dave Benbow, acting head of the IMLT, said: “This case is the first time we have used a Criminal Behaviour Order. Even when illegal lenders are convicted and sentenced, that is not the end of our work. We will do whatever we can to ensure they are not free to continue to blight communities in any way.”

## Loan shark sentenced and told to pay £147k

A 48-year-old woman who operated as a loan shark in West London was given a suspended jail sentence and told to complete 150 hours of unpaid work. She was later ordered to pay £147,000 following a Proceeds of Crime hearing.

Saowaluk Fernando, of Harlington Road, Uxbridge, was found guilty of two counts of illegal money lending and two of money laundering between 2012 and 2019 following a trial.

She appeared before Isleworth Crown Court for sentencing on Friday, June 28. She was given 24 months in custody, suspended for 18 months as well as the unpaid work and an electronically monitored curfew for four months.

Fernando made an estimated £250,000 from her lending and used the proceeds to fund her own lifestyle and overpay on her mortgage, in the absence of other income.

The case was back before the court on Friday, July 12, when the court made an order that her available assets of £147,000 should be confiscated under the Proceeds of Crime Act. Some of this money will go towards helping the fight against illegal lenders in England.

## Lender targeted vulnerable people on social media

A loan shark who targeted vulnerable borrowers using social media and then failed to turn up to court to face justice after being arrested was jailed for 16 months.

Anesu Blessing Samuriwo, aged 28, was first arrested in 2020 alongside Rovin Mavunga, 27, who was jailed for 16 months in 2021 after admitting two offences relating to illegal money lending.

Samuriwo initially denied the charges and later indicated he would change his plea but failed to turn up to court when required.

He was arrested in May and sentenced to eight weeks in custody for the bail act offence.



He appeared at Sheffield Crown Court via video link on June 27 to be sentenced after admitting acting as an illegal money lender jointly with Mavunga. Back in 2020, Samuriwo was living in Leicestershire, but the court heard he has since moved to Milton Keynes.

## £6,000 fine for illegal lender

A 60-year-old Leeds man who acted as a loan shark, lending thousands of pounds over a six-year period, was ordered to pay £6,000 by a court.

Richard Darcy, of Crescent Towers, appeared at Leeds Crown Court on Thursday, August 15, after admitting illegal money lending between June 2017 and November 2023. He was fined £6,000 with an order that it must be paid within three months, or he could face a prison sentence



## More partners sign up to give support



*Darlington Credit Union is a new partner*

Welcome aboard to all the organisations which have become official Stop Loan Sharks Partners in the past few months.

They include Rundles, Darlington Credit Union, Sandwell Council, Merseycare NHS Foundation Trust, Clockwise Credit Union, Fortem Solutions Ltd, and Welfare Together.

We are so grateful to the new organisations that have joined us and look forward to continuing to work closely with them. A big thank you also goes to all our existing partners who work so hard to help us tackle illegal money lending in our communities.



*The team at Rundles*

## How you have been helping Stop Loan Sharks

There are hundreds of ways that partners and other community organisations help to support us in the fight against loan sharks in England.

It can be signposting users to Stop Loan Sharks for support, running social media campaigns, working with us on Bite Back community weeks and much more.

Earlier this year, Birmingham Social Housing Partnership, a consortium of 30 housing associations based in the city, launched a social media awareness campaign to ensure tenants know the dangers of loan sharks and how we can help.

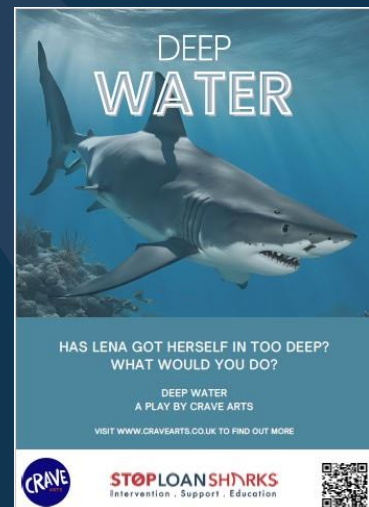
Elsewhere, Quaker Social Action's [Made of Money](#) Team has recently included links to the Stop Loan Sharks website as part of a resource for practitioners who support children and young people to learn money skills.

Community organisations also work with us using money seized from loan sharks under Proceeds of Crime legislation. A recent example of this is a play called Deep Water, produced by [Crave Arts](#). The interactive play was staged in Worcester to help teach audiences about the dangers of loan sharks.

These are just a handful of examples of how groups support the work of Stop Loan Sharks and we'd like to thank everyone who supports us in this way.

If you have an idea to spread the Stop Loan Sharks message, get in touch with us!

If you'd like to find out more about becoming an official partner visit [www.stoploansharks.co.uk/partner-recognition-programme](http://www.stoploansharks.co.uk/partner-recognition-programme)



# STOP LOAN SHARKS

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## Have you seen our recent campaigns?

### Stopping the shop window sharks

We have been asking people across England to 'shop a shark' by reporting postcards advertising loans.

Anyone who spots a postcard in a shop window on or a community noticeboard is being asked to report it to Stop Loan Sharks to investigate.

If anyone spots a suspicious ad, there is a new reporting form on the IMLT website where people can send details of an ad, anonymously if preferred. Retailers may also be asked to remove any suspicious cards and replace them with a card giving the contact details for Stop Loan Sharks as well as details of how to find a local credit union.

#### Have you seen an ad for a loan posted here?

Did it offer quick cash in small amounts?

There may be a loan shark behind it.

Report an ad at [stoploansharks.co.uk/report-a-loan-shark-advert/](https://stoploansharks.co.uk/report-a-loan-shark-advert/)

If you have borrowed or need advice, call 0300 555 2222

To borrow safely, try a Credit Union: [findyourcreditunion.co.uk](https://findyourcreditunion.co.uk)

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### Reaching over-55s

Age is no barrier for loan sharks – they can target borrowers from every generation.

In 2022, 22 per cent of those supported by Stop Loan Sharks were over 55. Our oldest borrower was 91.

Loan sharks can also be older. Recent cases included two women aged 67 and 71. A man who was prosecuted in Bristol was aged 78 and the Stop Loan Sharks Wales Team recently had a case involving an 83-year-old woman, dubbed Britain's oldest loan shark.

## Posters in 20 languages

It's vitally important that we get our messages out to every community group and with this in mind we began a project earlier this year to produce posters in different languages.

We engaged the services of the Clear Voice translation agency and linked up with 20 native speakers to explain the concept of a loan shark and outline the support we can offer.

The biggest challenge was that the phrase 'loan shark' with all its connotations did not immediately translate into all languages, so the help of the expert translators was vital to ensure the messages were conveyed effectively.

The leaflets and posters will be available for partners across England to order or to download and print.



To download posters and other resources, click [here](#)  
To report a postcard offering a loan, click [here](#)  
To download social media toolkits, click [here](#)



## Creative students help to make sure Stop Loan Sharks is a big hit on radio



We have been working with Bauer Media again recently to create radio ads raising awareness about Stop Loan Sharks.

Previously we staged a Creation Station workshop at Hits Radio Liverpool working with students from St Helens College. This time round we were at the station studios in Birmingham working with students from BMet College in the city.

It was a fantastic day and the students once again came up with some fantastic ideas for ads. Big thanks again to Bauer Media for working with us on this activity and supporting the work of Stop Loan Sharks.

The finished ads will be going out on air before Christmas, so tune in to find out more!



## Do you work with young people? Our free education packs can teach them to be money savvy

**Lessons about keeping your money safe, 5-11 years**



Teaching children about money from a young age is vital if we are to build a generation that has the skills and knowledge to be financially resilient.

Being able to manage money is a key life skill and we realise how important it is for young people to know the pitfalls and risks they may encounter in adulthood that may leave them vulnerable to loan sharks.

We have prepared free education resources that are available to use in primary and secondary schools to help with lessons looking at money and finance.

Our resources have been endorsed by Young Money and they can help schools and teachers plan effective lessons looking at this subject.

If you work with young people and would like to use these resources, click [here](#)

**Lessons in safer lending and borrowing, 11-19 years**



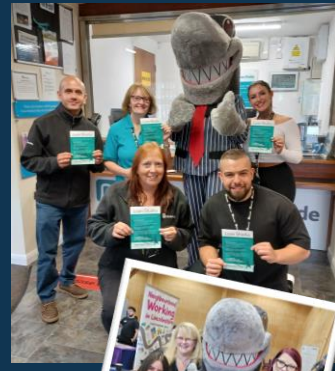
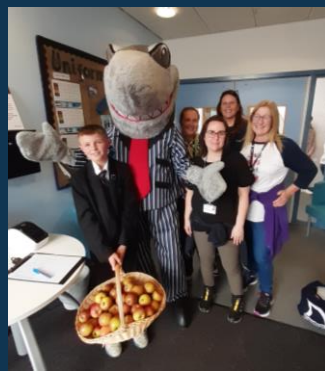
To access our free education resources click [here](#)



# STOP LOAN SHARKS

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## Out and about with Sid the Shark





**Arrests**  
**July – November 2024**



## Latest statistics

At least

32,000

People supported

856

Arrests

At least

£91.3m

Debt written off

426

Number of  
prosecutions

609

Number of years in jail  
for loan sharks

1.08m

Number of people in  
England borrowing  
from a loan shark

## How our work with Credit Unions is adding up

Credit Unions offer a safer alternative to borrowing from illegal lenders and we know that building a regular savings habit helps build financial resilience to keep people safe from loan sharks in the future.

We work with Credit Unions across the country to offer incentive schemes to encourage people to do just that. Using money seized from convicted loan sharks under Proceeds of Crime legislation, we offer a £25 bonus to those who meet all the criteria, join their local Credit Union and start saving regularly. And research shows that investment is paying off. Between April 2022 and April 2024, 1,276 members in England opened a Credit Union account under this initiative.



Their average savings balance at three months was £123.36 and at six months was £203.54 per member. At 12 months it was £211.40.

Less than 1% removed their savings balance after receiving the incentive and 22% of members went on to take out loans – of which 95% are performing well (paid in full, or on track with repayments. It seems that this is proving an effective way to help people on the road to financial stability.

## When Glenda met the Home Secretary



It's not just Sid getting out and about recently – Glenda the Lender found herself rubbing shoulders with Home Secretary Yvette Cooper when she went along to help mark 50 years of Victim Support in Castleford. Glenda was there with the team from Victim Support West Yorkshire and made sure she got in on the pictures!

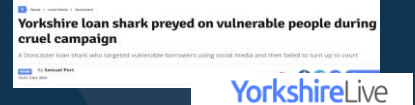
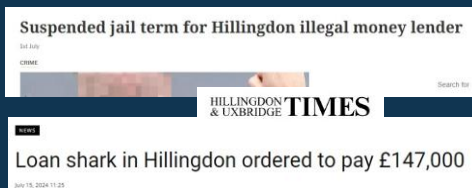




# STOP LOAN SHARKS

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## Stop Loan Sharks in the news . . .



... and on TV!





## Scotland round-up

### Funding handed to three groups

The Scottish Illegal Money Lending Unit was delighted to award funding to three organisations:

#### *Scottish Woman's Aid*

The project seeks to improve policy and practice reform on coerced debt, increasing and protecting women's financial independence. In order to understand coerced debt as experienced by survivors of domestic abuse SWA will research and develop their analysis over the next year.

#### *Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living*

The project is looking to provide disabled people and those with long term health conditions with financial workshops that help income maximisation, raise awareness of illegal money lending, provide support and guidance whilst improving their financial literacy/capability.

#### *Save by the Bell*

Save by the Bell is a financial education project that aims to reduce poverty by advancing financial literacy among Dundee school students. It provides support and training to enhance their financial knowledge, awareness, and capabilities, thereby improving their financial futures.

### Four more organisations sign up to Charter



The Scottish Illegal Money Lending Unit was delighted to add four more organisations to its Charter Mark. The Woman's Centre based in Glasgow, Muirhouse Low Income Families Together based in Edinburgh, Your Pay Your Way, Discovery Credit Union and First Class Credit Union all received their certificates. CEO of First Class Credit Union Gayle Adnyana is pictured collecting the certificate from Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Chair of the Trading Standards Scotland Governance Board.

## Christmas campaign and what's to come

We have lots of exciting things lined up for the last few weeks of 2024 and into next year, so get your diaries ready!

First will be our Christmas campaign. You can download our Christmas social media toolkit [here](#) and keep an eye on our social media to find out what happens when our Elf on the Shelf meets a Shark at the Park . . . Next year we will be overhauling our resources, with new poster and leaflet designs available to order and download.

Stop Loan Sharks Week 2025 will run from May 19th to 25th. In the meantime, we are delighted to report that we have been shortlisted in the prestigious [2024 Smarter Working Live Awards!](#)

Thanks for all your support so far and we look forward to continuing to work with you to Stop Loan Sharks!



## News from Wales

### Two warrants in Swansea

Two warrants were carried out in Swansea where £36,900 was found in cash at one of the properties. The cash was seized alongside jewellery, ledgers, loan agreements, pepper spray and firearms. The suspect was arrested and released on bail while the investigation continues.

### Llanelli arrests

A warrant was carried out in Llanelli and arrests were made on suspicion of illegal money lending and money laundering. Items were seized and the investigation is ongoing.

### Roadshow success

The Stop Loan Sharks Wales team met with colleagues from Trading Standards, local housing associations and other front-line organisations in North Wales, Carmarthenshire, and Ceredigion as part of their all-Wales roadshow. The final event is scheduled in late-November in Cardiff.

### Scotland team marks 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary



In August, the Scottish Illegal Money Lending Unit held a conference to mark 20 years since the founding of the team. The event heard from current and former staff members and a range of partner organisations spoke about the work to combat illegal money lending.