

A FRIENDLY MOVE. A DANGEROUS GAME.



STOP LOAN SHARKS
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GAME OVER FOR
LOAN SHARKS

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- Latest statistics

SLS Week 2026: Making it Game Over for loan sharks!

We joined the gaming world this Stop Loan Sharks Week (May 11 to 17, 2026) with the launch of our loan shark awareness game. Created in partnership with Digital Arts Box, the game brings to life just how easy it can be to become trapped in debt by a loan shark. Young people are also getting hands-on experience learning basic game design, with the chance to edit and create their own versions of the game with prizes for the best designs. See more inside about how to get involved . . .

Football support

We've been on the ball with awareness raising in recent months, with appearances at football matches across the country. Thanks to Stockport County and Reading FC, who invited us along to speak to fans and help spread the word about the dangers of loan sharks. A big thank you to the club officials and players who made this possible. Read more inside . . .



Loan shark is jailed and banned from driving



Alan Fawcett. Pic from Greater Manchester Police

A loan shark who ran a 'payday loan scheme' targeting vulnerable people as he bought and sold games consoles online has been jailed for four years.

Alan Fawcett ran his illegal money lending operation in the Greater Manchester area, giving out around £100,000 in loans and receiving around £130,000 back in repayments over a two-year period, Bolton Crown Court heard. The court was told that when borrowers struggled to repay what they had borrowed, he threatened them, leaving some 'living in fear' for themselves and their families. One of the borrowers said after the hearing: "Alan made me isolate myself and I've not been able to get straight since."

"I still close my blinds, and I don't leave the house. Now hopefully this is finally over I can move on." Fawcett, 54, of Wigan, admitted illegal money lending and money laundering between 2021 and 2023 but disputed the amounts involved and that any threats were involved. After a trial of issue, Mr Recorder Nicholas Flanagan found against Fawcett. He sentenced him to four years in jail for money laundering and 18 months for illegal money lending, to run concurrently. He was also disqualified from driving for four years as driving was an integral part of the offending.

Pair targeted vulnerable Thai nationals

A couple who acted as loan sharks, targeting vulnerable members of the Thai community, have been handed suspended jail terms.

Christopher Bates, aged 63, and Salujkit Rudchat, 46, appeared at Basildon Crown Court after admitting illegal money lending and money laundering.

His Honour Judge Shane Collery KC told them they acted deliberately, and added pressure and intimidation that affected borrowers' wellbeing and relationships. He sentenced Bates to a total of 19 months in prison suspended for two years while Rudchat was sentenced to 16 months, also suspended for two years.

'Ruthless' loan shark locked up



Carole Low. Pic Merseyside Police

A Wirral woman who acted as a loan shark while she helped her son to supply drugs has been sentenced to 39 months in jail.

Carole Low, aged 65, pleaded guilty to illegally lending money between 2018 and 2025 as well as two counts of conspiracy to supply controlled drugs.

Her son Seng Low, 43, admitted two charges of conspiracy to supply controlled drugs.

They both appeared before Liverpool Crown Court to be sentenced. The judge said Carole Low was involved in "ruthless exploitation" and that her "money lending was to people who were weak, vulnerable and unable to access money".

Borrower driven to brink of suicide

A man who was driven to the brink of suicide by a loan shark who threatened to set him on fire has bravely shared his story, telling how he escaped the clutches of the ruthless lender with the help of the England Illegal Money Lending Team. Simon, not his real name, spoke out as he wanted to help raise awareness about how loan sharks operate and to stop other people being targeted.

The 46-year-old, from the north-east of England, said he considered his lender a friend who helped out when times got tough. But he ended up afraid to leave the house. **Watch Simon tell the story himself [here](#).**

'Financial crime expert' told to pay £170k

A West London man who worked as a qualified anti-money laundering specialist but ran a loan shark operation on the side has had almost £170,000 of his ill-gotten gains confiscated by a court.

Dharmendra Devji Solanki, aged 59, admitted charges of illegal lending and money laundering and was handed a two-year prison sentence, suspended for two years, by a judge at Inner London Crown Court in June last year. He was back before the court on March 11 this year, where he was ordered to pay £169,941.89 after a Proceeds of Crime Act hearing.

You can read the full stories of these cases and more on stoploansharks.co.uk/news

Got information about loan sharks?

Email us [✉](mailto:info@stoploansharks.co.uk) or call 0300 555 2222 

Arrests
November 2025
to May 2026



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Out and about with Sid the Shark



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Stop Loan Sharks

Week 2026:

GAME OVER FOR LOAN SHARKS



Loan sharks are known for playing games with people's lives – so for this year's Stop Loan Sharks Week, we turned the tables with the launch of an innovative new computer game. Developed in partnership with Digital Arts Box, the game helps bring the dangers of illegal lending to life. It's been funded using money seized from convicted loan sharks. As well as playing the game, young people can edit characters and scenery, giving them a chance to learn coding skills. We're running a competition for schools, colleges and other groups working with young people, inviting players to submit their own versions of the game for a chance to win Amazon vouchers. Entries are open until June 30, 2026. The game has already been trialled in schools in Wirral and Stoke-on-Trent, where pupils loved trying their hand at beating the loan shark. To access the game, instruction videos and details of the prizes available, go to www.stoploansharks.co.uk/game-over-for-loan-sharks

Thank you!

Huge thanks to all those who supported Stop Loan Sharks Week this year by sharing online content and publishing our blog. Together we can make it Game Over For Loan Sharks!

Students get creative for radio ad campaign

We have been working with Bauer Media again this year to deliver another Creation Station workshop for students. This time it was young people from Salford City College who wrote and recorded their own ads raising awareness about loan sharks. We took over the Hits Radio studios in Manchester and we were so impressed with their ideas that were creative, confident and powerful. We might just have discovered some future radio stars in the making!

Massive thanks to Bauer Media Group for making it happen.



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New partners join the fight against loan sharks

Welcome aboard to our latest new accredited partner organisations and thanks to those who have renewed their accreditation. Among those organisations recently awarded partner accreditation is

Citizens Advice Sandwell & Walsall. Norfolk First Credit Union has also been awarded partner recognition along with Believe Housing based in Seaham, County Durham. All organisations that achieve partner recognition have gone above and beyond to support the work of Stop Loan Sharks. It's great to have you all working with us to help keep people safe from loan sharks – we couldn't do it without you!



The team at Believe Housing



Matt Lorimer and Cheryl Sewell of Citizens Advice Sandwell & Walsall



Norfolk First CU director Scott Porter with the Stop Loan Sharks certificate

New partners

Marston Holdings
Accommodation Concern
Believe Housing
Halton Housing
Citizens Advice Sandwell & Walsall
Norfolk First Credit Union
Money Buddies
Southway Housing
Society Matters Group -
Citizens Advice Gateshead
Colebrook SW Ltd

Renewals

Moneyline
Advice in County Durham
Redcar and Cleveland
Borough Council
Age UK Lincoln & South
Lincolnshire
Thames Bank Credit Union
Broadacres Housing
Association
Manchester Credit Union
SmartLyte Ltd
Wessex Water
Dudley CAB
Lendology
Seetecplus
Sussex Police
Heart of the South West
trading standards
service
Southway Housing

To find out more about partner accreditation, visit www.stoploansharks.co.uk/partner-recognition-programme/ or email catherine.wohlers@birmingham.gov.uk

Stop Loan Sharks news in brief

We are supporting West Midlands Police's Operation Fearless, a crackdown targeting the Soho Road and Handsworth Triangle in Birmingham. The operation focuses on tackling the crimes that matter most to local residents and improving safety in the area. As part of a multi-agency approach, we are working alongside police and partners to help keep people living and working in the area safe. If you are nearby, you may spot our campaign messages on local billboards.



In Sunderland, dozens of representatives from organisations across the area recently attended a Stop Loan Sharks charter signing event at Sunderland City Hall. Attendees pledged their commitment to supporting the work of Stop Loan Sharks and tackling illegal lending in their communities.



Our 'We Will Help You Make the Call' campaign is continuing, encouraging partner organisations to open their doors as Stop Loan Sharks access points. This provides a safe place for people who may not have access to a phone or computer to seek support if they are affected by illegal lending. Darlington Credit Union is one of the latest organisations to join the scheme, helping to expand access to support within the community.

Got information about loan sharks?

Email us  or call 0300 555 2222 

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Stop Loan Sharks in the news

Telegraph & Argus

Man, 66, arrested over illegal money lending in Leeds

EALINGTIMES

West Ealing crime specialist who acted as loan shark to pay £170K

heart 100.7
turn up the feel good!

Children in Stoke-on-Trent use video game to learn about illegal money lending

Interactive game aims to protect the next generation from loan sharks

EssexLive

Loan shark couple targeted vulnerable members of Thai community with illegal money lending

The pair have been given suspended prison sentences



Sunderland Echo

Suspected loan shark arrested in Washington

London Now

Suspected loan shark arrested in Worcester Park operation

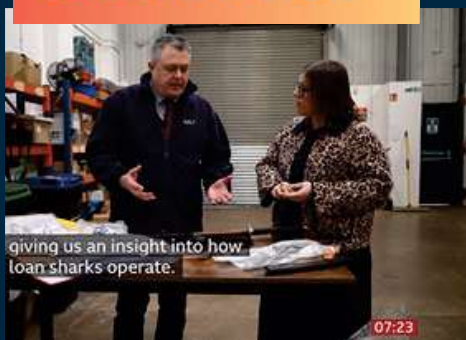
ECH

He claimed to be selling Xboxes and PlayStations online - but he left people 'too afraid to leave their homes'



BBC POINTS WEST

BBC BREAKFAST



one Morning Live



BBC LOOK NORTH

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On the ball and on the buses with Stop Loan Sharks



This season, we've explored new ways to reach more people through our awareness-raising campaigns, including connecting with thousands of football fans.

In December, we joined Reading FC at their match against Luton Town to highlight the risks of illegal lending at Christmas, with players wearing Stop Loan Sharks T-shirts ahead of kick-off.

In March, we were pitchside at Stockport County FC vs Northampton Town with Glenda the Lender and Sid the Shark, talking to supporters.

Our message also reached fans at West Bromwich Albion, where Stop Loan Sharks adverts appeared on digital screens around the stadium throughout the season.



Meanwhile, over in Worcester we have had ads on buses making sure passengers get the message that loan sharks can be anyone - a mate, a neighbour, a stranger, a colleague.



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News from Scotland and Wales



As well as Stop Loan Sharks England, there are similar teams covering Scotland and Wales. [Stop Loan Sharks Wales](#) and the [Scottish Illegal Money Lending Unit](#).

Midlothian loan shark exploited colleagues

Neil Stewart Forrester (59), from Gorebridge, was sentenced at Edinburgh Sheriff Court to 117 hours of unpaid work following a guilty plea to charges of illegal money lending and threatening and abusive behaviour.

The investigation, led by the Scottish Illegal Money Lending Unit (SIMLU), revealed that Forrester, formerly employed as a refuse collector and GMB Union Representative at Midlothian Council's Stobhill Depot, abused his position of trust to exploit vulnerable colleagues. Between January 2018 and August 2022, he issued unauthorised loans ranging from £20 to £500 to at least 14 individuals, enforcing repayments through intimidation and threats. Evidence showed that more than £100,000 was repaid, far exceeding the original loan amounts.

Three arrests in Fife

On 23rd April 2026, officers from the Scottish Illegal Money Lending Unit (SIMLU), with the assistance of partner agencies, searched 2 premises of suspected loan sharks in Methil, Fife. A 63-year-old female, a 60-year-old male and a 34-year-old male have been arrested on suspicion of illegal money lending.

Report reveals hidden crisis of coerced debt

A groundbreaking new research report, "[It's always there, like a shadow behind you](#)": Women's Experiences of Coerced Debt and Recovery in Scotland, has uncovered the devastating impact of coerced debt as a form of economic abuse in Scotland and provides recommendations for cross-sector reform.

The report, developed by Scottish Women's Aid and commissioned by the Scottish Illegal Money Lending Unit and Trading Standards Scotland, is the first dedicated qualitative study examining coerced debt as a form of domestic abuse in Scotland.

Two suspects arrested in Wales

Stop Loan Sharks Wales executed a warrant at a property in the Newport area in March with one person arrested.

The investigation is ongoing, and the suspect is believed to have been active in and around Newport.

And back in December, 2025, the Wales team arrested a 70-year-old man in eastern Cardiff on suspicion of illegal money lending and money laundering. Officers seized cash, mobile phones, electronic devices, and documents. Both investigations are ongoing.

Former Swansea postmaster admits illegal lending

A 69-year-old man has pleaded guilty at Cardiff Crown Court for running an illegal money lending operation and laundering proceeds of crime.

Jonathan Mark Barry, a former postmaster in Killay, Swansea, pleaded guilty to the offences of illegal money lending and money laundering following a detailed investigation by Stop Loan Sharks Wales.

The investigation into Barry began after Stop Loan Sharks Wales received intelligence indicating that Jonathan Mark Barry was illegally lending money, commonly referred to as loan sharking. In July 2024, officers executed search warrants at his home and at the Killay News and Post Office. During the searches, they discovered £37,000 in cash, along with high-value luxury items including a gold watch, a diamond bracelet and several gold bars. Through his financial records, it was uncovered that Barry was a prolific loan shark and had been operating over a long period of time. Investigators were able to identify approximately 120 victims that had been exploited by Barry across a fourteen-year period. Bank records revealed that he had issued approximately £130,000 in unlawful loans and had received more than £344,000 in repayments and unexplained cash deposits. He charged interest rates ranging from 20% to an astonishing 1,303%, leaving many victims with little or no money to live on after making their repayments to Barry.

He will be sentenced later.

Got information about loan sharks?

Email us [✉](#) or call 0300 555 2222 [☎](#)

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Stop Loan Sharks in numbers

At least
33,000
people supported

434
successful
prosecutions

1.08m
people borrowing
from a loan shark in
England

618
years in jail for loan
sharks

At least
£92m
illegal debt written
off

906
arrests

How you can help in the fight loan sharks

We are grateful to all of our partner organisations across England who do so much to help us find and deal with illegal lending. So how can you help?

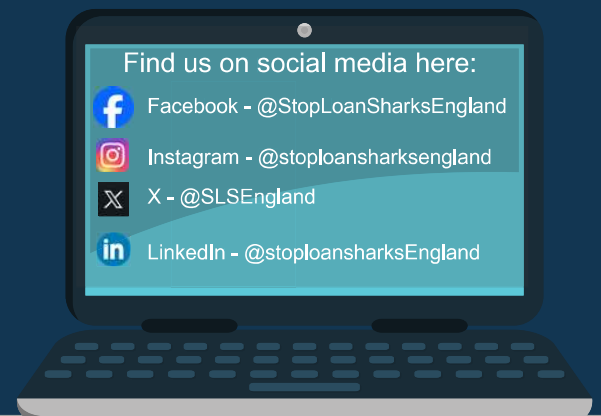
Resources - we have a host of resources available, including posters (including a selection in different languages) leaflets, postcards and other promotional items. We can send those out to you and we can also supply bespoke articles or blogs for use on websites, in newsletters etc. We can also supply bespoke screensavers for your organisation to display at specific times of the year, for example, during Stop Loan Sharks Week.

Social media toolkits - we have a variety of social media toolkits ready to post that you can share and add your own messaging to raise awareness and reach those who may need help.

Training - we can offer free training to organisations that may come into contact with potential borrowers. This can be delivered in person or remotely and gives teams the specialist information and tools they need to be able to spot the signs of a loan shark and where they can refer people to get help.

Partner accreditation programme - organisations are invited to apply for full accreditation.

If you'd like to access any of these, or want to find out more, go to stoploansharks.co.uk or email press@stoploansharks.gov.uk



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Email us [✉](mailto:press@stoploansharks.gov.uk) or call 0300 555 2222 [☎](tel:03005552222)

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