



Illegal Money Lending Team

What is a loan shark?

Illegal lenders prey on some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, often charging exorbitant rates of interest. They often leave people trapped in a spiral of debt then resort to the most extreme methods to enforce repayments. Most illegal lenders start by being friendly and are often heard of by word of mouth, but change when payments are missed.

Illegal lenders;

- Do not hold a licence from the Office of Fair Trading to operate.
- Often offer little or no paperwork.
- Often refuse to tell the borrower how much they still owe, when they will finish repayments or the interest rate (interest rates of 131,000% APR have been seen)
- Often increase the debt or add additional amounts.
- May take items as security- including passports, bank cards and driving licences.
- May resort to violence, threats and intimidation.

What is being done to stop this?

The Illegal Money Lending Team investigates illegal money lending and any related offences- in the past this has included violence, blackmail, drugs offences, threats, kidnap and even rape.

They have secured over 182 prosecutions leading to over 107 years worth of prison sentences, written of £37million worth of illegal debt and helped over 16,000 victims.

To crack down on illegal lenders, we seek the help of our partner organisations. Through awareness raising in communities, illegal lenders can be brought to light. We feel it is important that frontline staff have an awareness of illegal lending in order to help their clients.

We can offer you:

- Presentations to staff and volunteers to raise awareness
- Articles for newsletters and publicity tools, including a shark suit, a blimp banners and more.
- Tailored training for staff (lasting 2-3 hours) to provide in depth discussion about intelligence, victim support , money laundering responsibilities and crime prevention
- One to one support for any client who is the victim of an illegal lender
- Materials such as questionnaires for door knocking exercise, a pop up banner for temporary display in a reception area, pdfs of posters and postcards for you to print
- Certificates for staff and evidence of training and partnership working for inspections
- Ways of targeting communities to help them stay away from illegal money lenders
- A resource in terms of staffing for awareness raising events for tenants
- Housing best practise guide jointly developed with CIH

To book the enhanced training, presentations and other services on offer contact Patrick Brown on Telephone number 07825979049 or email Patrick.brown@birmingham.gov.uk

We would urge you to contact us if you are aware of any kind of illegal money lending activity. Our confidential hotline is answered 24/7 by trained investigators:

To report a loan shark:

Call the 24/7 confidential hotline 0300 555 2222
Text 'loan shark + your message' to 60003
E-mail reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk
Log-on to www.direct.gov.uk/stoploansharks

If you would like further information on any of the above for your organisation please contact email Catherine.wohlers@birmingham.gov.uk