



Staffordshire Police Evaluation Report



**ILLEGAL MONEY LENDING TEAM
PO BOX12971
BIRMINGHAM
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PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Stop Loan Sharks initiative was set up by the then Department of Trade and Industry, now Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), in 2004 with two pilot Illegal Money Lending Projects in Birmingham and Glasgow, covering the Central area of England and Scotland respectively. The aim was to discover the extent of illegal lending in vulnerable communities and assess the value of having a dedicated trading standards team to investigate and prosecute illegal lending, and in the case of the Birmingham Team related criminal activity; this had historically been split between trading standards and police, resulting in a lack of prosecutions for this type of activity.

The pilot schemes proved so successful that the initiative expanded initially across the north of England, then the East, South East and Yorkshire and Humber during 2007 and 2008; then in 2011 merged so that there is now an England, Scotland and a Wales team.

The project contains two specific roles, that of investigators and LIAISE Officers (Leads in Awareness, Intelligence, Support and Education). The investigators role is to detect, gather intelligence about, execute warrants at the property of, and, where appropriate, prosecute illegal money lenders.

The LIAISE role is to work with victims of illegal lenders to ensure they have access to all the services required to ensure they remain safe, and are supported through a transition into financial inclusion. LIAISE Officers also help generate intelligence within communities, and work with local partnerships to raise awareness about Illegal Money Lending and promote ways of borrowing safely.

The overall aim of the project is:

To protect communities from illegal money lenders and the damage they can cause by identifying, investigating and prosecuting illegal lenders and supporting their victims in the transition from financial exclusion to financial inclusion.

What is a Loan Shark?

A loan shark is someone who is running an unauthorised business under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, without permission from Financial Conduct Authority.

Typical characteristics displayed by loan sharks.

- No credit agreements given – “you owe me this much today”
- No receipts for payment or payment books
- Violence or intimidation (or threats of such) if repayments are missed
- Loans to young people (under 18's)
- Can take illegal securities e.g. cash card
- Never advertise – find clients by word of mouth

WHY WE ARE DIFFERENT

The Illegal Money Lending Team is a criminal investigation team based in Birmingham and covering England. They are a standalone trading standards unit who identify, investigate and prosecute illegal money lenders or loan sharks.

The team includes seconded police, accredited financial investigators, victim support - one to one support for any client who is the victim of an illegal lender and we don't place a burden on local resources, intelligence cell, phone forensic experts, and use local authority prosecutors rather than the CPS.

Loan sharks are often involved in other criminality including drugs, counterfeit and stolen goods, and occasionally organised crime.

The team prosecute for all offences and have done so for rape, kidnap, firearms, drugs and assault. The longest sentence was an indefinite one for public protection.

RECORDABLE CRIME FOR ILLEGAL MONEY LENDING

Historically the use of loan sharks or the act of illegal money lending has not been correctly identified as a criminal offence. It may be that the act of lending money in this way is sometimes seen as a civil issue.

Greater Manchester Police have been working alongside the Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) who are a National investigative body aligned to trading standards and who investigate and prosecute those engaged in illegal money lending.

A number of people have been successfully charged with specific offences relating to this activity.

Police Officers

When charging any person with the offence of illegal money laundering or as a loan shark, the Home Office code to use is 099/85 - Registration Licence-Consumer Credit

The [Police National Legal Database](#) (PNLD) confirms the crime as being recordable as an offence Contrary to S39(1) of the Consumer Credit Act 1974.

The mode of trial is an Either Way offence with the maximum sentence being Summary, level 5 fines or 2 year indictment and a fine.

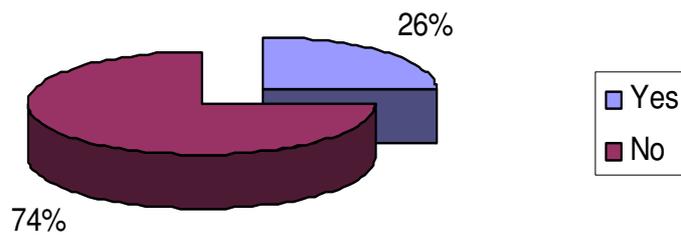
Prosecution is by the Illegal Money Lending Team contact 0300 555 2222 or email j.wiltshire@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

TRAINING FEEDBACK

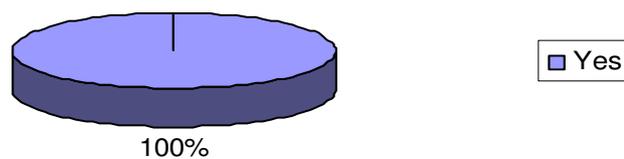
Police Officers and PCSO'S were asked number of questions after the training session. Below are the results of the Officer's answers. Each Policing Team was allocated 1 hour

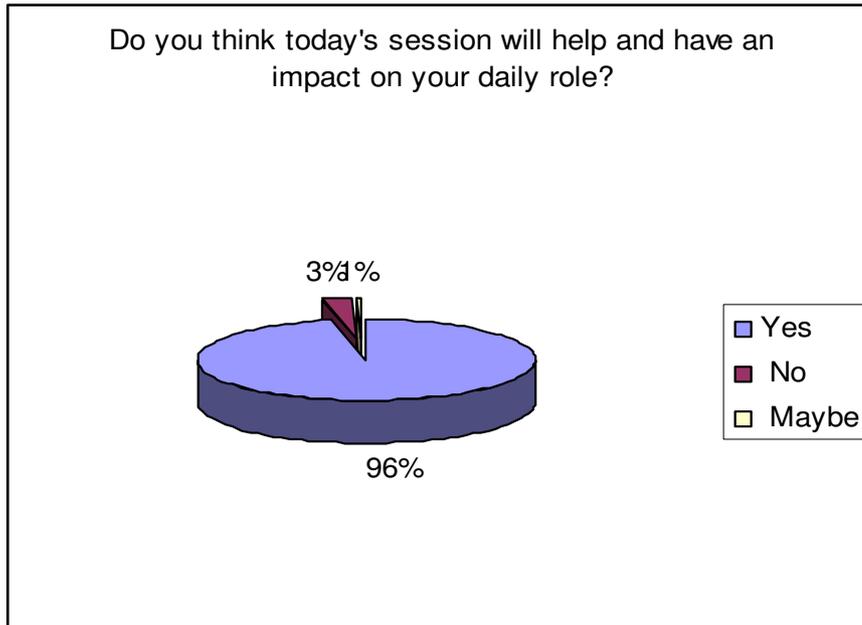
Area	Numbers
Central Stoke	39
South Stoke	24
North Stoke	71
Newcastle	18
Total	152

Before Today's training session were you aware of Stop Loan Shark Campaign?



Did you find the session useful?





Majority of participants found the training useful and thought it would help and have an impact on their daily role.

FEEDBACK FROM POLICE OFFICERS AND PCSO'S

“Very useful input and needs to be force wide” Police Officer

“Excellent, thank you” Police Officer

“Very informative session, worth bearing in mind when dealing with incidents” Police Officer

“An enjoyable and informative input, thank you” PCSO

“No previous knowledge of this subject, fantastic input and highly recommended for all frontline staff” Police Officer

“Good input on area of criminality not generally explored by response officers” Police Officer

For more information on this report, please contact Nadeem Mahammed
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