

STOP LOAN SHARKS

Intervention . Support . Education

For Immediate release

August 28, 2024

Poster campaign to target loan sharks among migrant communities

Posters and leaflets in 20 different languages have been produced by the England Illegal Money Lending Team as it strives to target previously unreached communities that may be struggling with loan sharks.

The IMLT, also known as Stop Loan Sharks, has worked with translation agency Clear Voice, to make sure the leaflets get the right message across to people who may be looking for support or advice.

Twenty translators who are native speakers of the languages concerned were enlisted to ensure the posters use the right phrasing and tone of voice to convey the messages correctly in each case.

Dave Benbow, acting head of the IMLT, said: "Illegal lenders will target anyone they perceive as vulnerable. For someone who is new to the country who may not speak much English, the process of accessing credit here may seem complicated and protracted.

"This is where illegal lenders can step in; they might come across as a concerned local who wants to help or may even speak the language and make the borrower feel at ease as though they are a friend.

"Sadly, that can be where the friendly approach ends as the lender traps the borrower in a cycle of debt and misery.

"We want to make sure no section of the community is left at the mercy of these predatory criminals, and we want to make sure everyone knows exactly where and how they can get help and support if they need it."

Dave said the challenge for the team was that the phrase 'loan shark' with all its connotations did not immediately translate into all languages, so the help of expert translators from the countries concerned was vital to ensure the messages were conveyed effectively.

"We are confident these resources do that, and we hope they are useful for partners in different areas of the country to use to reach these potential borrowers and stop them being targeted by illegal lenders," he added.

“We do have access to interpreters, so people shouldn’t be afraid of calling our team if they do need help. They can contact us in confidence on our 24/7 hotline, via email or on the Live Chat facility.”

Rachael Tew, Head of Partnerships at Clear Voice, added: “We were delighted to work with IMLT on such an important project. Here at Clear Voice, we understand the importance of breaking down language barriers, our team of translators and interpreters understand colloquialisms, and the need to ensure clarity for all. As a Social Enterprise we relish the opportunity to help support vulnerable people and ensure everyone can be made aware of such an important issue.”

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

The 20 languages are:

- Bengali
- Dari
- Lithuanian
- Latvian
- Pashto
- Urdu
- Arabic
- Chinese
- Chinese (simplified)
- Czech
- Farsi
- Hindi
- Hungarian
- Kurdish Sorani
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Punjabi
- Romanian
- Russian
- Tigrinya

Any organisations that would like to access the resources in different languages can email press@stoploansharks.co.uk or download the posters from the website www.stoploansharks.co.uk/resources/

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the IMLT. Since its launch, the team has supported over 31,700 people and written off over £91.3 million worth of illegal debt, securing over 420 prosecutions for illegal money lending, leading to over 600 years in jail.

Anyone who has been affected by illegal money lending should call the Stop Loan Sharks 24/7 Helpline on 0300 555 2222 or access support online at

www.stoploansharks.co.uk. Live Chat is available on the website from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

ENDS

Picture caption: Some of the posters produced

Issued by Sally-Anne Youll, IMLT press officer. For media enquiries, please email Sally-Anne.Youll@birmingham.gov.uk or call 07840712850.

Notes to editors:

The Illegal Money Lending Teams in England, Scotland and Wales work alongside the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to investigate those operating within the consumer credit market without the appropriate authorisation.

The Illegal Money Lending Teams in England and Wales work in partnership with local Trading Standards Authorities in their related countries. They consist of specialist officers who investigate and prosecute illegal money lending and related activity and LIAISE officers who support victims and raise awareness of the dangers of borrowing from illegal money lenders.

SOCIAL MEDIA – needs pic of posters

Uzsorás, lichwiarz, agiota, loan shark - whatever you call them, illegal lenders are predatory criminals and we want to make sure everyone stays safe from them.

We want every section of society knows about the dangers of loan sharks and where they can turn for help.

Working with expert translators from Clear Voice, we have produced a series of posters and leaflets that get the message across clearly in 20 different languages.

If you would like a poster, you can download them here (link to resources online)