



AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

ENFORCEMENT AND COMMUNITY NEWS MAY—AUGUST 2016

Violent loan shark who charged 4.5 MILLION per cent APR told debtor he would 'bury his dead body'



Thomas Johnson, 41, who operated an illegal money lending business in the Brinnington area of Stockport was sentenced to **33 months** in prison on 28th July by HHJ Potter following a hearing at Minshull Street Crown Court in Manchester.

Mr Johnson often offered out short term loans (typically over 7 days) and charged double the amount for every £1 he loaned out to his victims. If a payment was missed, he would then double the victim's loan balance.

One victim described how Johnson jokingly told him that he could borrow as much money as he liked but if he didn't pay, Johnson would break his legs. Johnson said that no-one got away without paying and that he even tracked someone down in Spain to repay a debt.

SENTENCINGS



LOAN SHARK 'RICCIARDI' RECEIVES EIGHTEEN MONTH PRISON SENTENCE

A man from Sawbridgeworth was sentenced to 18 months in prison following a hearing at St Albans Crown Court by His Honour Judge Bright.

Carmine Ricciardi, 58 was investigated by the England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT), working in partnership with Hertfordshire Trading Standards and Hertfordshire Constabulary. He pleaded guilty to Illegal Money Lending and a proceeds of crime offence at an earlier hearing.

Ben Mills, prosecuting, told the court how Ricciardi ran a sophisticated illegal money lending business from November 2008 until his arrest in March 2015. Records found during the search of Ricciardi's house showed that between June 2009 and November 2012 he had issued 282 loans to 49 individuals. The loans ranged between £30 and £5,000 and the money was "rented" to people in that they paid an amount each week to have the money but the capital balance was not reduced until it could be paid off in full. The value of the loans issued in this period was £104,410 with repayments of £239,430. Records were not found for the rest of the lending period, but if the activity had continued at the same pace, Ricciardi would have received repayments of around £500,000.

One victim described how he was introduced to Ricciardi by a drug dealer to borrow money to pay off a drug debt. He paid back £10,000 for loans of around £2,500 in payments of £20-£200 a week and two lump sums of £2,500 and £1,500. The £2,500 was paid as a lump sum by the victim's relative as full and final settlement of the debt but Ricciardi kept coming back for more. The victim paid a further £1,500 to release himself from Ricciardi's control. But Ricciardi continued to demand money. As the debt spiralled the victim sold personal belongings and started missing rent payments to pay Ricciardi.

TWO OLDHAM LOAN SHARKS RECEIVE FOURTEEN MONTH PRISON

SENTENCES

Two men from Oldham were sentenced to 14 months following a hearing before HHJ Lewis at Minshull Street Crown Court.

Zayarit Mahmood, 42 and Javid Iqbal, 37 were investigated by the England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT), working in partnership with Oldham Council and Greater Manchester Police. They had pleaded guilty to Illegal Money Lending at an earlier hearing.

Simon Mortimer said on behalf of the prosecution the defendants would stalk Casinos and ensure they were in a position to either offer immediate cash loans to gamblers in the region of £1000, or seize repayments if a borrower was seen to make a winning. The loans were effectively rented out at the rate of £300/any part of a month, for every £1000 borrowed, until the capital loan was repaid. For example, if £1000 were borrowed in the casino and, on the same night, winnings were obtained in excess of that amount, £1300 would be repaid to the defendants that same evening. The offending ran from at least the 25th March 2003 until it was stopped on the 18th March 2013.

REDDITCH LOAN SHARK SENTENCED TO EIGHT MONTHS IN PRISON

Donna Whyte, 43, of Redditch was sentenced to 8 months in prison following a hearing at Worcester Crown Court on 10th May 2016.

Whyte had around 50 regular victims, often with multiple loans each, ranging from £100-£400. She had lent out £33,000 from January 2012 until her arrest in March 2015.

Upon sentencing, Mr Recorder Desmond said "You continued to run the business even when in prison for other offences. You used your influence to involve others in the business, collecting payments. On release from prison you demanded at least one customer make up payments missed whilst you were in prison by way of a penalty."

LANCASHIRE LOAN SHARKS SENTENCED TO EIGHT MONTHS IN PRISON

David Scott, aged 52, and Karen Scott, aged 45 both from Eccleston were sentenced to 8 months imprisonment each, following a hearing at Preston Crown Court on Friday 15th July. Catherine Luders of Ormskirk, was sentenced to 8 months in prison, suspended for two years.

A warrant was executed in November 2015 at Luders and Scott's home addresses which resulted in the recovery of documentation

Catherine Luders and Karen Scott played operational roles whilst David Scott assisted in collecting on late or non-payers.

Luders was a legitimate money lender until December 2012 when her licence lapsed and she didn't renew it. She had been a licensed money lender since June 1997. After December 2012 she continued to collect and grant new loans in the unlicensed period and then merged with Karen Scott.

Karen Scott has been trading since April 2014 from the earliest record. She was never granted a license to lend money.

Examination of mobile phones seized during both searches revealed SMS text messages between loan customers and the defendants either requesting loans or arranging collection of loans.

Analysis of the loan documentation showed that between June 2014 and July 2015 Karen and David Scott advanced £67,235 to loan customers and received £77,645.

PLYMOUTH LOAN SHARK SENTENCED TO TWELVE MONTHS

IMPRISONMENT

Mark Constantine, 55, of Plymouth was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment, suspended for 2 years following a hearing at Plymouth Crown Court on 16th May 2016.

Records show Constantine had nearly fifty clients, mainly taxi drivers, who were looking for finance to purchase vehicles. He took some form of security from most of his victims, often keeping the spare key and the registration document of the vehicle he sold them until the final payment was made.

PAYBACK TIME FOR LOAN SHARKS



LOAN SHARK ORDERED TO PAY BACK £193,280

Gordon Sylvester, 54 who operated as a loan shark in Willesden, London, was ordered to pay back **£193,280** following a hearing at Snaresbrook Crown Court on 10th June 2016. He must pay the amount in the next three months or could face a prison sentence of up to thirty months.

Sylvester was sentenced to 16 months in prison for illegal money lending plus four months for forgery in October 2015. At the time it was estimated that he had made **£450,000** from his loan shark business.

Upon arrest Sylvester had £18,340 in cash on his person. During the search of his property, electrical items including documents were seized.

TORQUAY LOAN SHARKS ORDERED TO PAY BACK £89,000

A 45-year-old woman and a 40-year-old man, who operated an illegal money lending business in Torquay, have been ordered to pay back **£89,000** following a hearing at Exeter Crown Court on 9th June 2016.

Theodora Bacquain, of Torquay, was given a 16-month sentence, suspended for 18 months and ordered to do 180 hours of unpaid work at an earlier hearing. Her husband, Nardo Bacquain, was given a nine-month sentence, suspended for 18 months and ordered to do 100 hours of unpaid work at the same hearing. They must pay the money within 3 months or face twelve months in prison.

ESSEX LOAN SHARK ORDERED TO PAY BACK £76,500

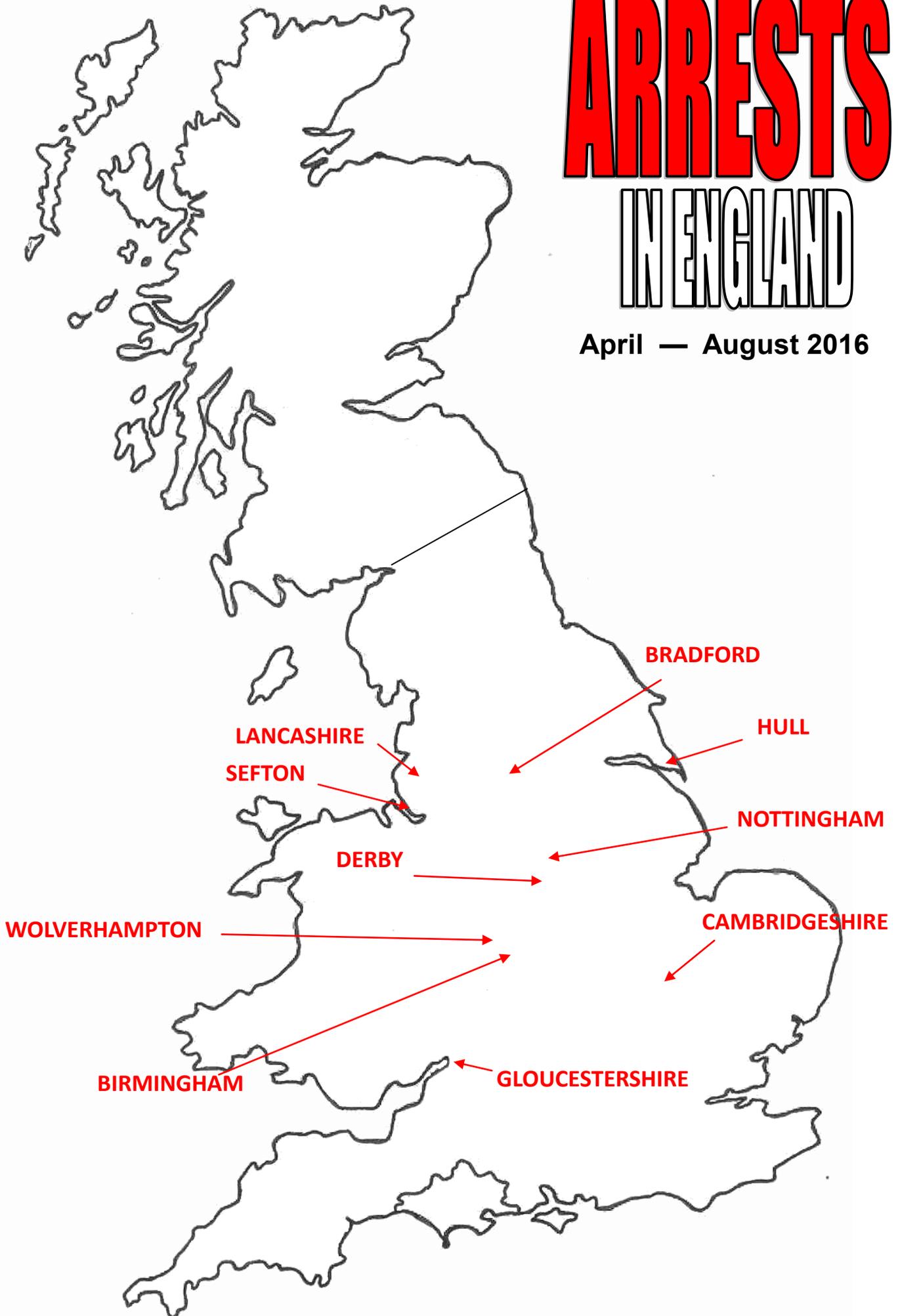
A 32 year old man who operated as a loan shark in Essex, was ordered to pay back **£76,500** following a hearing at Basildon Crown Court on 25th May 2016.

Douglas Smith was given a eight months suspended sentence for two years, a curfew for four months, a supervision order for two years and was made to attend a Thinking Skills programme at an earlier hearing. He must pay the amount in the next three months or face a prison sentence of 2 years. His criminal benefit was assessed as being £87,759.



ARRESTS IN ENGLAND

April — August 2016





IMLT MAKES HEADLINES



Manchester
Evening News



Jail for 'violent and dishonest' loan shark who charged an APR of four million per cent

Read the Full Story: <http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/jail-violent-dishonest-loan-shark-11677707>

Suspected loan shark arrested in Chorley

Read the Full Story: <http://www.lep.co.uk/news/suspected-loan-shark-arrested-in-chorley-1-8061141>

Suspected loan shark arrested in Derby

Read the Full Story: <http://www.derbytelegraph.co.uk/suspected-loan-shark-arrested-in-derby/story-29647014-detail/story.html>

Loan shark charged 'eye-watering' interest, Plymouth court told

Read the Full Story: <http://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/loan-shark-charged-eye-watering-plymouth-court/story-29279886-detail/story.html>



COMMUNITY NEWS



BITE BACK WEEK SUCCESS

LIAISE Officers have been working hard to host Bite Back weeks in their regions, so far in Gloucester, Milton Keynes, Bracknell and more...

Keep an eye out, there are many more locations to follow!



COMMUNITY NEWS BITE BACK WEEK SUCCESS

Our LIAISE Officers have been busy, working in partnership with housing associations, police forces, credit unions and local charities as part of 'Bite Back' week in their areas.

Bite Back weeks have consisted of training sessions, leaflet drops, social media campaigns, charter signings, awareness raising events and not forgetting, special appearances from our renowned mascots, "Sid the Shark" and "Glenda the Lender".

If you have a 'Bite Back' week coming up in your area, encourage your partners to tweet us their pictures using our handle @LoanSharkNews.



**Leaflet Drop in Lodge Park and Woodrow
with West Mercia Police**



**Deputy Mayor Cllr David Hopkins signing Loan
Shark Zero Tolerance Charter as part of Bite Back
Week in Milton Keynes**

Did someone say a £25 savings boost?



Credit Unions help to tackle loan sharks

In some areas of the country, LIAISE Officers are working with local credit unions to launch new credit incentives to encourage more residents to save with a legal, and safer alternative as apposed to borrowing from illegal money lenders.

Through a joint initiative, the Team have used proceeds of crime money, confiscated from convicted illegal money lenders to sponsor new credit union accounts.

Local credit unions, who have been involved in this promotional scheme, are rewarding up to fifty new members who make at least three monthly payments with a savings boost of £25.00.



Birmingham Indoor Market Welcomes New Savings & Loan Hub

Birmingham Indoor Market welcome a new savings & loan hub, set up by The City Financial Inclusion Group along with IMLT, Advance Credit union, City Save Credit Union and Money Line. The Hub is open every Money to Thursday 1pm—4pm and can be found at the Indoor Market Community Hub.

It is hoped that this venture will give residents an alternative to loan sharks by offering ethical and affordable loans. As part of the launch event a social media campaign took place with local organisations tweeting and making residents aware of the opening with the hash tag #Brumfunds.



Sid & Glenda's Photo Album



Glenda with the Mayor at the Grand Opening of South Bank Credit Union



Sid Raising Awareness in Manchester with Mancunian Way and One Manchester



Sid getting a trim during Gloucester Week of Action



Sid working with West Merca Police to help raise awareness of loan sharks



Sid posing with the first members to sign up to a new savings account at NEFirst Credit Union



Glenda working with Better Off Wolverhampton

Poster Competition



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR POSTER WINNERS!

Congratulations to Lucy Hampson, and Katie Barnes on their fantastic poster designs which have now been professionally reproduced and displayed across Liverpool to highlight the dangers of loan sharks in co-junction with Riverside, Liverpool East Youth Consortium and the Illegal Money Lending Team.

Both winners were presented with the posters and a small gift by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Councillor Tony Concepcion and the Lady Mayoress, Anne.

COMMUNITY NEWS YOUR CHOICE SCHEME

PROCEEDS OF CRIME MONEY USED TO FUND COMMUNITY PROJECTS THROUGH 'YOUR CHOICE' SCHEME

In some areas of the country, LIAISE officers have been working with local community groups to encourage them to bid for Proceeds of Crime Money. This money has been confiscated from convicted loan sharks and is being used to fund worthwhile projects that help raise awareness of loan sharks.

The '**Your Choice**' scheme gives residents in the area a say in how money taken from loan sharks is spent to improve their community. The England Illegal Money Lending Team have put forward a pot of 'proceeds of crime' money to fund credible projects which help raise awareness of loan sharks.

The scheme aims to see the money these loan sharks made, used wisely, to benefit key areas. Local residents, charities, community and voluntary groups, schools and statutory agencies are all welcome to bid for proceeds of crime money but projects must at least one of the following:

- Promote legal, affordable credit options to prevent people from using loan sharks – for example, encouraging new credit union accounts.
- Prevent wider crime and disorder whilst promoting the Stop Loan Sharks messages.



UPDATES FROM...



JAIL FOR LOAN SHARK WHO CHARGED 400,000% INTEREST

Christopher Harvey, 53, was jailed for 40 months at Cardiff Crown Court. Harvey earlier pleaded guilty on the second day of his trial, to two counts of illegal money lending, three charges of theft and four charges of fraud.

Father of twenty one children, Harvey of Hengoed near Caerphilly, South Wales described himself as the 'patriarch' of his family, and took money from eight 'disadvantaged' people over a ten year period. He took control of his victims' post office and bank cards and helped himself to more than £22,000 of their own money—giving them only small sums to live on. Harvey would then lend their own money back to his desperate victims – charging extortionate interest of up to **400,000% APR**.

Himself unemployed for over 16 years, Harvey stole benefit money from his victims and would charge £20 for a £10 loan – saying they owed him £5 in interest and £5 for the petrol he needed to pick up money from the bank. The family members preyed on by Harvey were particularly vulnerable. On occasions they were left so hard up that they could not afford to pay for food or gas.

TRADING STANDARDS SCOTLAND WORKING WITH NHS

LOTHIAN TO PROMOTE THE DANGERS OF LOAN SHARKS



Trading Standards Scotland is providing training to staff in NHS Lothian to help promote the dangers of illegal money lenders. Training is being provided to Health Visitors, Midwives and Practice Nurse to make them aware of the dangers that loan sharks can cause to their victims. The ongoing programme is being rolled out throughout the NHS Lothian area starting with Edinburgh.

If anyone wishes further information on training or information on the work we do regarding Illegal Money Lending in Scotland they should contact 0800 074 0878 or email john.pollock@cosla.gov.uk

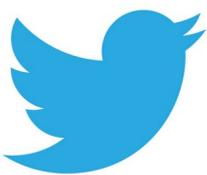
STAY IN TOUCH WITH IMLT ENGLAND



Give us a 'LIKE' on Facebook ...

@STOPLOANSHARKSPROJECT

COMING SOON: THE NEW STOP LOAN SHARKS WEBSITE!



Follow us on Twitter...

@LOANSHARKNEWS

Don't get bitten by a loan shark!

Have you or anyone you know:

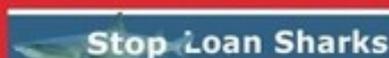
- ⇒ Been offered a cash loan without paperwork?
- ⇒ Been threatened when you couldn't pay?
- ⇒ Had your bank card taken from you?
- ⇒ Had a loan which keeps growing even though you are making payments?

If you can answer yes to the above you may have been bitten by a Loan Shark.

For confidential help contact the Illegal Money Lending Team

Telephone: 0300 555 2222 (local call rate)

Email: reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk



Department for Business
Innovation & Skills

