

The latest update on Loan Sharks is as follows:

- Sharon Church (Benefits Manager) has been in touch with the Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) that deal with Loan Sharks. They have confirmed that there are no active investigations on Loan Sharks in the ED area at this time. This doesn't mean that they aren't active in our area just that they aren't being reported. I think we all recognise with the ongoing pressure on household bills there is concern that more people will use them.
- We have put 9 Benefit staff and our Financial Resilience Officers on the free training provided by the IMLT. Some staff have already attended at least one of the sessions. The first session is to show how to recognise Loan Sharks and the second is how to help residents overcome the barriers that prevent them reporting. This will be widened out to further staff as we move forward with the vulnerable debt tool kit and use of the standard financial statement (SFS) probably after April. They will also come in and attend some team meetings in the future again when we are ready with the tool kit and SFS as this work will allow further staff to potentially identify those at risk or who are using loan sharks.
- In terms of campaigns we have now got the literature from the IMLT to put something out in the residents newsletter and social media campaigns. This has all been drafted and the aim is for this to be issued in the next edition.
- We have also updated our website to include information about Loan Sharks and Illegal Money Lending. See [Financial Support and Advice - Loan Sharks and Illegal Money Lending - East Devon](#)
- Sharon is also exploring on becoming partners with the IMLT but needs to read this through properly to understand what's involved. Sharon has also updated them on the work this Council is doing on poverty (data gathering etc) and offered that we look to work together where possible on highlighting areas where there may be a risk from our data. They have expressed interest in this and also looking at how they can feed back into our data to help with that overall picture.
- Citizens Advice have received the same training that we are booked onto and have the same liaison officer so we will be working with the same people that they do.

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