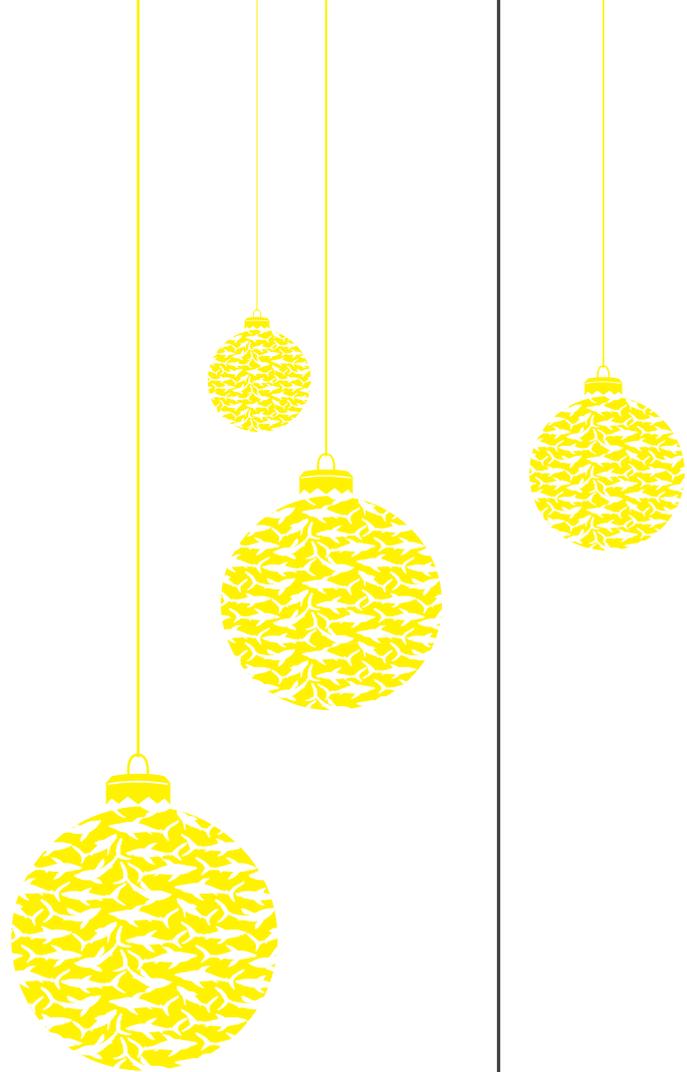


## Top tips for saving money this Christmas

- 1. Get creative.** Homemade presents, cakes and gift tags are the perfect way to save money at Christmas. Adding a personal touch, a present that has been lovingly hand-crafted often means much more than a bought gift.
- 2. Stick to your list.** Last minute, impulse buys are the ones that push your finances into crisis. Leave your credit card at home and take out a specific amount of cash for each gift you need to buy.
- 3. Make a pact.** Father Christmas will, of course, visit the little ones – but adults can probably go without jolly reindeer jumpers and the latest cookbook. A ‘no presents pact’ or set price limit with family and friends will save you a small fortune.
- 4. Shop around.** Try as many different places as possible or look online to find the best price for Christmas goodies. It’s also worth dropping branded products to see if you can get the same or better when it comes to things like food and drink.
- 5. Buy in advance.** The best time to start shopping for Christmas is Boxing Day. OK, so forward-planning isn’t going to help with cutting the cost of Christmas this year, but it will definitely make you feel a little richer in 12 months’ time.



# Illegal money lenders: don't take the bait!

Loan sharks are illegal lenders who often target unsuspecting individuals and families on low income. They may pretend to be a “friend of a friend” but borrowing from them is never a good idea.



## How to spot a loan shark

A loan shark may:

- Offer little or no paperwork, such as a license, credit agreement or record of payments.
- Increase the debt or add additional amounts to it without your permission.
- Refuse to give information, such as the interest rate or how much you still owe.
- Take items as security, such as passports, bank cards or driving licenses.
- Not allow you to settle your debt, or get nasty – they may resort to intimidation, threats or violence.

## Help

If a lender is operating illegally it's likely your loan could be written off.

Find out what to do if you or someone you know owes money to a loan shark:

Email: [reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk](mailto:reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0300 555 2222

Text: LOAN SHARK and the lender's details to 07860022116

Calls are confidential and lines open 24 hours a day