# People smugglers use Birmingham money shop to fund Channel crossings, investigation reveals



People smugglers in the UK are reportedly leveraging high street shops to facilitate the illegal crossing of migrants through the English Channel. A recent investigation by The Telegraph has uncovered alarming evidence suggesting that a money transfer shop in Birmingham was complicit in aiding a global smuggling network.

The investigation involves undercover reporters who initiated contact with a Calais-based smuggler named Sangari. Posing as an Afghan national, one reporter inquired about sending a relative from France to the UK. Upon expressing the need to transfer funds to the UK, the smuggler provided contact details for someone in Birmingham known as Esmat, directing the reporters to make a cash payment of £1,500 at the money exchange shop.

At the shop, the undercover team contacted Esmat, who promptly instructed them to deposit the money into his account. This exchange was recorded without knowledge of the shop staff. In one segment, a broker confirmed, “Ok, that’s good. Should I add it to your account? Do you have my WhatsApp? Send me a hi.” The broker further explained the process, saying, “It’s ok. You give me £1,500 and it’s all right. You need to bring the money and a passport, then we will give you a paper record.” He also suggested that the reporters use one of their passports for the transaction, assuring them that the money would ultimately reach the intended recipient in Afghanistan, although he refrained from providing precise details regarding its ultimate destination.

The investigation highlights a concerning trend, as over 10,000 individuals have arrived in the UK via small boats this year alone. This situation has raised questions about the role of legitimate businesses in facilitating illegal activities and the wider implications for law enforcement in combating human trafficking and smuggling operations.

Authorities, including both UK and German forces, have ramped up efforts to dismantle small boat smuggling operations in the channel, but the involvement of high street businesses adds a new layer of complexity to the ongoing crisis.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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