# Investigation launched into Turkish-style barber shops over money laundering concerns



A nationwide investigation led by the National Crime Agency (NCA) is currently underway, targeting the growing prevalence of Turkish-style barber shops across the United Kingdom. Authorities are concerned that these establishments may be utilised by criminal organisations for money laundering and other forms of organised crime. Over the past month, NCA officers have overseen a series of raids throughout the country, as reported by The Sunday Times.

These operations have reportedly resulted in multiple arrests and the seizure of significant amounts of money, estimated to be in the tens of thousands of pounds. The investigation has involved a collaborative effort from a variety of agencies, including a “large number” of police forces, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), and Home Office Immigration Enforcement.

The suspicion is that many of the barber shops, which have proliferated in recent years, are functioning as fronts for laundering drug-related profits and other criminal earnings, while also allegedly providing employment opportunities for illegal migrants. An NCA spokesperson indicated the agency's focus on uncovering any illicit practices associated with these businesses.

During some of the raids, particularly in north-east England, tax inspectors are reported to have employed tactics such as counting the number of chairs within the salons and observing customer traffic to evaluate the declared profits of the businesses. This approach aims to identify discrepancies that may suggest tax evasion or other financial irregularities.

According to Green Street, a retail analytics company, the total number of barber shops in the UK has surged by over 50 per cent since 2018, with the tally exceeding 18,000 establishments. Last year alone saw the opening of more than 750 new barber shops. While the majority of these Turkish-style barbers operate lawfully, many of the establishments targeted in the recent operations predominantly operate on a cash-only basis, raising further concerns regarding their financial transparency and compliance with regulations.

The ongoing investigation reflects broader concerns regarding the intersection of legitimate businesses and organised crime, highlighting the need for vigilance in regulatory practices within sectors experiencing rapid growth.

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

## References

* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/03/19/barber-shops-increasingly-front-crime-security-sources-warn/> - This article supports the claim that barber shops, including those with Turkish and other ethnic backgrounds, are increasingly suspected of being fronts for organised crime such as human trafficking and money laundering.
* <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/cash-only-bossman-british-right-wing-party-targets-turkish-barber-shops> - It corroborates the concern about cash-only barber shops being potentially linked to money laundering, as raised by political figures in the UK.
* <https://www.gbnews.com/news/migrants-immigration-officers-raid-barbershop-criminal-gangs-high-street> - This news piece highlights raids on barbershops suspected of employing illegal migrants and engaging in criminal activities, aligning with concerns about their exploitation by criminal gangs.
* <https://www.courts.michigan.gov/492eca/siteassets/publications/benchbooks/evidence/evidbb.pdf> - While not directly related to the UK investigation, this document discusses the importance of evidence authenticity and could be relevant in legal contexts, though not directly to the specific claims about Turkish barber shops.
* <https://www.justice.gov/archives/sco/file/1373816/dl?inline=> - This document is not relevant to the current investigation about Turkish barber shops but relates to organised crime investigations in a broader geopolitical context.