

Press release: Attempted people smuggler jailed

Canterbury Crown Court heard how on 22 March 2016, a car was stopped by Border Force officers at the UK Control Zone in Coquelles, France. The driver was Hamid Alhendi, 42, and he had a passenger in his car.

The passenger presented a Dutch identity card. Border Force officers were not satisfied that the card belonged to the passenger. The passenger was found to be an Iraqi national and passed to the French authorities.

Deputy Director Dave Smith, from Border Force South East and Europe, said:

Border Force officers quickly recognised that the passenger's documentation wasn't legitimate.

The expertise of Border Force officers prevented illegal entry into the UK and is an example of the excellent work of our officers every day to stop abuse of our immigration rules.

Alhendi, of Hendale Avenue, Hendon, was arrested at the scene and the case was passed to Immigration Enforcement's Criminal and Financial Investigation (CFI) team.

Alhendi had told Border Force officers that his passenger was a friend of a friend who he had met at a party they had both attended in Paderborn during his trip to Germany. He stated that at the party he had agreed to take the man to London.

Following his arrest, Alhendi's story changed. He claimed that he had initially agreed to give the man a lift to Amsterdam on his way home, a 2 hour detour. However, on his way out of Germany he damaged one of the front tyres on his car. Not willing to travel all the way to the Netherlands on a damaged tyre he told his passenger that he would instead take him to the UK and pay for his flight from London to Amsterdam.

After a 3 day trial at Canterbury Crown Court Alhendi was found guilty today (23 August) and was sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment.

Assistant Director David Fairclough, from the Immigration Enforcement Criminal Investigations team, said:

Mr Alhendi's story simply didn't add up. Our officers built a strong case to disprove his claims, including showing from phone records that the individuals had been in contact before Alhendi

left the UK, despite him claiming they had never met before.

I hope this conviction sends a clear message that people smuggling will not be tolerated and that the consequences for those who engage in such criminality are severe.

Anyone with information about suspected immigration abuse can contact [Crimestoppers](#) on 0800 555 111 anonymously.