

Four arrested in Midlands following people smuggling investigation

News story

Four people have been arrested by Immigration Enforcement in connection with a people smuggling investigation as warrants were executed in Birmingham, Leicester, Telford and Coventry.



At approximately 6am today (8 July) officers from Immigration Enforcement's Criminal and Financial Investigation (CFI) team executed warrants at six addresses – two in Birmingham, two in Leicester and one in both Coventry and Telford.

The arrests relate to an investigation into attempts to smuggle people into the UK hidden in the rear storage area of vans. Between June and September, 2018, Border Force officers at the juxtaposed controls in northern France prevented three such attempts involving a total of 18 Iraqi nationals. The Iraqis were referred to the Police Aux Frontieres for their cases to be dealt with.

Minister for Immigration Compliance and the Courts Chris Philp said:

These arrests were made as part of an ongoing investigation into a suspected organised crime group involved in people smuggling. We believe that the arrests made today will have significantly disrupted the group's activities. "People smuggling is an abhorrent crime that treats migrants as human cargo to be profited from. We are determined to do all we can to dismantle the criminal networks involved in illegal immigration.

All those encountered were arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to assist unlawful immigration. They included a 37 year old man at Harold Street, Leicester; a 42 year old man at Althorp Close, Leicester; a 50 year old man at Wiseman Grove, Birmingham and a 39 year old man at Wealdstone in Telford.

The Immigration Enforcement investigation continues with the evidence gathered today.

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[Joint statement of the international maritime virtual summit on crew changes](#)

Government response

Governments from across the world express their appreciation to seafarers and pledge to urgently resolve issues that have arisen due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Our collective efforts to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic have demonstrated the critical need to prioritise the continued functioning of global supply chains to ensure the resilience of our national economies, and the importance of facilitating the safe and efficient operation of the maritime transportation system, which moves over 80% of global trade.

Critical to this endeavour is the ability of shipping companies to continue conducting crew changes throughout the world, notwithstanding the restrictions applied by many national authorities in response to the pandemic.

We, as the representatives of governments attending the International Maritime Summit on Crew Changes held on 9 July 2020 by the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, are deeply concerned by the global crisis.

Specifically, those created by ongoing obstacles affecting ship's crew

changes, the impact on the wellbeing of seafarers, and the impact that any failure by governments to resolve these issues will have on maritime transport, which must be permitted to continue to operate safely and efficiently throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Specifically, we acknowledge, as a matter of urgent concern:

- that the inability of ship operators worldwide to conduct ship's crew changes is the single most pressing maritime operational challenge to the safe and efficient movement of global trade
- at least 200,000 seafarers are estimated to require immediate repatriation, with many serving on extended crew contracts who are overdue to return home, in addition to a similar number of seafarers that urgently need to join their ships in order to allow the world's internationally trading vessels to continue to operate safely
- seafarers' tours of duty cannot continue to be extended and need to be kept to a duration of less than 12 months, as set out by the [Maritime Labour Convention \(MLC\) 2006](#), as amended – the global shipping industry estimates that, since March 2020, only about 25% of normal crew changes have taken place; apart from the humanitarian and crew welfare concerns, and issues of regulatory compliance, there is an increasing risk that fatigue and mental health issues could lead to serious maritime accidents
- the complexity of facilitating ship's crew changes, regardless of the seafarers' nationality, requires concerted action as well as access to commercial flights to the principal seafarer countries of origin and those countries where crew changes take place
- that the health and wellbeing of seafarers is paramount and is inextricably linked to the continuing safety and efficiency of ship operations
- that the uncertainty around a possible second wave of COVID-19 underscores the need for swift actions without further delay to allow crew changes and to avoid further consequences to the already fragile global supply chain, which relies on goods transported by ships
- that the lessons learned during the COVID-19 outbreak be used to create international protocols in partnership with the maritime industry and the regulatory agencies, to provide practical instruments to facilitate shipping operations and enable seafarers to perform their essential role, in case of a future global pandemic

We therefore recognise the importance of the pledges set out below and, as a matter of urgency, to:

1. Encourage all International Maritime Organization (IMO) states to designate seafarers as "key workers" providing an essential service, to facilitate a safe and unhindered movement for embarking or disembarking a vessel.
2. Consider the legal possibilities for accepting internationally recognised documentation, such as [International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers certificate](#), the [International Labour Organization \(ILO\) Seafarers' Identity Document \(ILO 185\)](#) and a letter by the seafarers' company, carried by seafarers

as evidence of their status as key workers, and purpose of their travel and movement for crew changes.

3. Engage, nationally, multilaterally and bilaterally, in discussions about implementation, to the maximum extent possible, as appropriate to the circumstances that may prevail nationally or locally, of the [recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#), circulated to IMO member states as Circular Letter No.4204/Add.14 on 5 May 2020.
4. Review, working in conjunction with our health, immigration and other relevant ministries, agencies and authorities, the necessity of any restrictions that may continue to apply, at national and/or local level, to the movement and travel of seafarers for the purpose of conducting ships' crew changes. This includes the possibility of allowing exemptions from quarantine or similar restrictions in accordance with relevant international rules or health regulatory guidelines.
5. Consider, in liaison with our relevant ministries and authorities, including those responsible for immigration, temporary measures including (where possible under relevant law) the possibility of waivers, exemptions or other relaxations from any visa or documentary requirements that might normally apply to seafarers.
6. Explore, in cooperation with the International Civil Aviation Organization and the aviation industry, ways of increasing access, as soon as possible, to commercial flights to and from the principal countries of origin of seafarers and the airports in reasonable proximity to those seaports where crew changes are effected.
7. Urge all IMO members to take any necessary measures, within their area of jurisdiction, to ensure seafarers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic enjoy safe crew changes as well as repatriation to their home countries or to their place of ordinary residence.

We express our deepest appreciation to the world's seafarers who have continued tirelessly to operate ships and move trade throughout this global crisis, and pledge to take forward these actions at this summit with the urgency and resolve needed by the situation.

Together, we can avert the global crisis that is unfolding at sea and play our part in helping the world defeat the coronavirus (COVID-19).

The governments of:

- United Kingdom
- Denmark
- Germany
- Greece
- Indonesia
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Philippines
- Saudi Arabia
- Singapore
- United Arab Emirates
- United States of America

[Called-in decision: land At Purley Baptist Church, 1 Russell Hill Road, 1-4 Russell Hill Parade, 2-12 Brighton Road, Purley Hall and 1-9 Banstead Road, Purley \(ref: 3174139 – 9 July 2020\)](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content]Decision letter and Inspector's Report for a called-in decision.

[Latest ESFA senior staff changes](#)

News story

An update from Eileen Milner, ESFA chief executive, on senior staff moves in the agency



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

Eileen Milner, ESFA chief executive said:

ESFA's Director of Funding, Kate Josephs, has been asked to take up a Director General role in the Cabinet Office dealing with the Government response to COVID-19, with immediate effect.

Kate has been responsible for leading and overseeing the creation and operation of a single Funding Operations Centre of Excellence responsible for schools, academies and post-16 funding. This includes the allocation of all schools and academies funding including the national funding formula, the post-16 funding agenda, apprenticeships funding and adults skills funding. In addition to her role of Director of Funding, Kate has also been the lead Director of ESFA's COVID-19 core team. She has expertly balanced two very demanding roles and has done so with great skill and capability.

From Thursday 16 July John Edwards, the Regional Schools Commissioner for East Midlands and the Humber, will be moving across to join ESFA as the new Director of Funding. John brings with him a wealth of experience as an RSC and in local government. I know he is very much looking forward to working with the directorate team and stakeholders to continue to develop an efficient and user-centred approach across the agency's funding responsibilities.

I wish Kate and John all the very best as they step into their new roles.

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[UK Space Agency, European Space Agency and DCMS open call for proposals on 5G and space](#)

The UK Space Agency, European Space Agency (ESA) and DCMS have joined forces to invite companies to submit ideas for how they can use 5G terrestrial and space technology to support the UK's logistics businesses – from rail to ports, from DPD to Amazon.

A digital presence and the need to be connected is intrinsic to modern life and in recent times, new digital networks have increasingly been replacing old physical infrastructure as ever more services migrate online. The rollout of 5G networks will play a vital role in supporting faster connectivity across the country and innovative new systems, such as the Internet of Things.

COVID-19 has reaffirmed just how important logistics companies are in not just the UK, but across the world – keeping us connected and providing vital

services like food to people's homes and medical deliveries to people's hospitals.

The Call for Proposals launched today will seek out proposals from businesses for how ESA, the UK Space Agency and DCMS can use space technology to support the logistics sector in a 5G environment, and in doing so, increase the connectivity and close the digital divide for businesses in this sector.

Catherine Mealing-Jones, Director of Growth at the UK Space Agency, said:

This is a great initiative to show how together we can work to help close the digital divide. Access to constant connectivity regardless of location offers huge benefits.

We've seen through the current pandemic, that logistics are vital to keeping the country going and space technology is a key part of making that happen.

Magali Vaissiere, ESA Director of Telecommunications and Integrated Applications said:

This is a great opportunity for ESA to join forces with DCMS and UK Space Agency and prove the key role that satellite communications will play in the future converged 5G networks.

In the context of the ESA 5G Strategic Programme Line, this Call for Proposals is intended to stimulate the emergence of sustainable applications relying on innovative 5G solutions, starting from the logistics sector.

This Call for Proposals follows the Memorandum of Intent signed in December 2019 by ESA and DCMS, designed to support the emergence of commercially viable products and services enabled by the deployment of converged 5G terrestrial and space networks.

The UK already hosts the European Centre for Space Applications and Telecommunications in Harwell, Oxfordshire, and the European Space Agency announced at the end of June that it is to open a new 'space tech incubation unit' in Leicester to help start-ups access the expertise they need, whether it be from university research to large corporations.

This is one of a number of business incubation centres across the UK supporting entrepreneurs and innovators who want to join our growing space sector.