



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

20th March 2017

Jean Com St Laurent

RE: ASYLUM FOR TORTURE SURVIVORS.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of asylum for torture survivors.

You are right that granting protection to those who genuinely need it and refusing those who do not, in as efficient, sensitive, and effective, a way as possible, is crucial.

In that vein, I have been assured that all members of staff who make asylum decisions receive a comprehensive level of training. This includes a dedicated five-week *Foundation Training Programme* that includes training on international and domestic law and safeguarding issues, which is supplemented by a mentoring programme with an experienced caseworker that lasts from three to six months. More specifically, the *Foundation Training Programme* also includes a detailed section which covers torture claims involving medico-legal reports.

The course is explicit that decision makers must not make clinical judgements and must properly consider evidence and give appropriate weight to all evidence presented in order to reach an informed decision, only rejecting claims when there is a significant reason to do so. The course includes example medico-legal reports, which the trainees must analyse and interpret as part of a number of practical exercises.

Similarly, following training, there is a robust quality assurance process in place involving technical specialists embedded within each team, senior caseworkers within each unit and a national internal quality audit team, who ensure that all policies are complied with when decisions are made.

I should also highlight that Asylum Operations recently received funding from the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund to review and redevelop its training prospectus. As part of that work, Asylum Operations is liaising with a range of external stakeholders, including charities and non-governmental organisations, to ensure that there is robust and effective safeguarding training.



The cases of those who have been abused, who claim asylum in the UK, must be processed quickly and efficiently, and I am assured the procedures are in place to do so.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

with best wishes,

Tom

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**