

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

6<sup>th</sup> October 2020

*Jean Comfrent,*

**RE: CHILD REFUGEES.**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of asylum seekers and refugee resettlement; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

The UK continues to be one of the world's leading refugee resettlement states. As a country, we resettle more refugees than any other in Europe and we are in the top five countries worldwide. Since 2015, the Government has resettled more than 25,000 vulnerable refugees in need of protection through our refugee resettlement schemes, with around half being children.

You mentioned that more needs to be done in this area and I agree. In the year ending March 2020, over 7,400 refugee family reunion visas were issued to partners and the children of those previously granted asylum or humanitarian protection in the UK. This is 37 percent more than in the previous year.

I understand your concerns and agree that when it is safe to do so, the UK should recommence refugee resettlement. I welcome the fact that the Home Office is evaluating how to respond and is continuing to discuss this with international and domestic stakeholders.

It is important that this is not rushed as plans to restart resettlement are dependent on a number of factors. These include the lifting of restrictions imposed by governments of host refugee countries, local authority and central government capacity, and the recovery of the asylum system from the impact of COVID-19. It is good news that the Government is taking action, but I will continue to push Ministers to restart resettlement as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so.

It is also important to note that the UK will continue to reunite unaccompanied children with family members in the UK under the *Dublin Regulation* during the transition period, processing and deciding all 'take back' requests that have been submitted.

I should say that I respectfully believe that our disagreement on this issue is more about process than policy. As you may be aware, the Government presented a sincere offer to the EU on a future reciprocal arrangement for the family reunion of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children where it is in the child's best interests. I welcome the fact that the Government has agreed to revisit the UK's unilateral position if an agreement is not possible.



The Prime Minister made clear the importance that the Government places on ensuring that unaccompanied children who are seeking international protection in an EU Member State can continue to be reunited with specified family members who are in the UK, as well as children in the UK with family in the EU, following the UK's exit from the EU.

As you mention, in 2016, Parliament agreed to relocate 480 unaccompanied children from Europe to the UK. In May this year, the Government announced that 478 children from Greece, Italy and France had been transferred to the UK under the scheme. The final two transfers were suspended due to the travel restrictions in place owing to the Coronavirus pandemic. You may be pleased to hear that the UK has now completed the final two transfers and therefore completed the commitment you have referred to under the 'Dubs Amendment'.

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**