



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

22nd May 2022

Jean Contreant,

RE: ASYLUM SEEKERS' RIGHT TO WORK.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of asylum seekers and employment. I have read your comments on this issue with interest.

I recognise that this is a very important issue; the UK has a proud tradition of providing a place of safety for refugees. Each claim for asylum is carefully considered and where it is found that individuals are in need of protection, asylum is given. Those with refugee status have immediate and unrestricted access to the labour market.

Asylum seekers are allowed to apply for permission to work, in jobs on the Shortage Occupation List, if their claim has not been decided after 12 months through no fault of their own. The current policy aims to strike a balance between being equitable towards asylum seekers, while considering the rights and needs of our society as a whole, prioritising jobs for British citizens and those with leave to remain here, including refugees.

Although I imagine it is not the answer you were hoping to receive, the Government found through its recent review that the fiscal benefits arising from a relaxation of the right to work policy were likely to be significantly lower than the figures claimed by Lift the Ban. In light of our wider priorities to fix the broken asylum system, reduce pull factors to the UK, and ensure policies do not encourage people to undercut the resident labour force, the Home Office made the decision to retain the UK's asylum seeker right to work policy with no further changes.

I welcome this outcome, which I know will protect our immigration system from those lodging unfounded asylum claims in an attempt to avoid work visa rules, particularly at a time when the number of dangerous journeys made by small boats across the Channel remains extremely high.

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 PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE