

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

11<sup>th</sup> February 2023

*Jean Gauthier*

**RE: MISSING UNACCOMPANIED MIGRANT CHILDREN**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about unaccompanied child migrants in the UK. I have read your comments with interest.

I am aware that the rise in small boat crossings to the UK has placed a significant strain on the asylum accommodation system. As such, the Home Office currently has no alternative but to temporarily use hotels to give some unaccompanied minors a place to stay while the local authority finds them more suitable accommodation.

I can assure you that the Government takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and there are procedures in place to ensure all under-18s are accommodated as safely as possible while in hotels. This includes personnel who provide 24/7 supervision, with support from teams of social workers and nurses. Further staff, including contractors, receive briefings and guidance on how to safeguard minors, and all children receive a welfare interview. The movements of under-18s in and out of hotels are also monitored and recorded, and they are accompanied by social workers when attending organised activities.

The Home Office does not have the power to detain unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in these settings and we know a small number do go missing. When any child goes missing, a multi-agency missing persons protocol is mobilised alongside the police and the relevant local authority to establish their whereabouts and to ensure they are safe. Many of those who have gone missing are subsequently traced and located.

More broadly, the Government has made clear the use of hotels must end as soon as possible. I welcome that the Home Office is providing local authorities with children's services with £15,000 for eligible young people they take into their care from a dedicated UASC - unaccompanied asylum-seeking children - hotel, or the reception and safe care service in Kent.

I can assure you that safeguarding concerns for unaccompanied minors are, and will remain, a priority for the Government. I am glad that reforms are being introduced to ensure that there is a fair and effective asylum system that works in the interests of the British people.

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,*  
*T.P.*

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