



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

23rd August 2023

Dear Constance,

RE: ILLEGAL MIGRATION ACT - LORDS AMENDMENTS

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of amendments tabled in the House of Lords during the passage of the *Illegal Migration Act 2023*. I have read your comments with interest.

I can assure you that the UK has a proud history of supporting those in need of protection, and since 2015, we have welcomed 480,000 people through safe and legal routes from all over the world, as well as via country-specific routes from Syria, Hong Kong, Afghanistan and Ukraine. Indeed, I was proud to lead that work during my time as a Home Office Minister.

But while our compassion may be infinite, our capacity to help is not. The numbers now crossing the English Channel illegally via small boats reached 45,000 last year and we are now spending over £7 million a day on housing them in hotels, because local authorities do not have the capacity to support them. This is not sustainable, and it is impacting on our ability to help those genuinely in danger who might come via our safe and legal routes.

I understand that the Government said that existing policy does not set a hard limit of six months in which claims must be processed.

Turning to Amendment 14, I am aware that Clause 4 of the Act provides that asylum claims, and human rights claims against removal to the person's home country, cannot be processed. Lord Dubs' amendment would have allowed claims to be processed if they are lodged by unaccompanied children. I can assure you that the Government does recognise the vulnerability of unaccompanied children, but this is why the Act has been introduced to deter them from making dangerous, life endangering journeys to the UK.

As for Baroness Mobarik's amendment, I understand that the Government is clear that there will not be separate time limits on children who are accompanied. This is due to concerns that children may be put at further risk by adults seeking to pass off unaccompanied children as their own.

Finally, on the Bishop of Durham's amendment, I understand that the Government did not support this, as Section 55 of the *Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009* already requires the Home Secretary to have regard to child welfare in carrying out immigration functions. The Government is also working with stakeholders and the Department for Education around these issues.



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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tom Pursglove', with a horizontal line underneath.

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