

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

May 2016

Dear Constituent,

Thanks for contacting me about the amendment that was proposed by Lord Dubs – calling for the Government to relocate 3,000 children from Europe.

Firstly, I would like to state that I really do understand your concerns when it comes to this matter, and I accept that the situation is certainly very upsetting. Both the Government and I recognise that more could be done to respond to the continuing migration crisis and how best it can support the most vulnerable people affected by this appalling situation, and I am glad to report that the Government is now taking further action. This includes the establishment of a new resettlement scheme focused on the children at risk in the Middle East and North Africa which is supported by the UNHCR and which will see up to 3,000 people relocated to the UK over the next four years.

In Europe, the Department for International Development has committed £46 million to help support refugees and a £10 million fund focused specifically on the needs of children in Europe. This includes supporting reunification with family they may have been separated from and who are in other EU countries including the UK. Separately, 75 UK experts are being deployed to Greece to support more effective reception screening and processing of newly arrived migrants which will also help identify children and see that they are given appropriate support and care at the earliest opportunity.

There has been a lot of misinformation in the press regarding the support Britain has provided to victims of the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis. However, rest assured that this Government regards this emergency with the upmost seriousness, and I believe that our response truly reflects the gravity of the situation. Put simply, the UK is the largest bilateral contributor to the crisis in Europe and the Balkans. We have doubled our aid for the Syrian crisis to £2.3 billion, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis. This support has reached hundreds of thousands of people. Furthermore, in February we co-hosted the London conference to galvanise international efforts, securing pledges of more than \$11 billion, the largest amount ever raised in one day for a humanitarian crisis. These commitments will create an estimated 1.1 million jobs for refugees and host country citizens by 2018 and by the end of the school year 2016/17



1.7 million refugee and vulnerable children will be in quality education with equal access for girls and boys.

The Government's focus has been on how it can play the most effective role in an extremely difficult situation and not make matters even worse or lead to inadvertent consequences where people traffickers encourage more children to put their lives at risk by making the dangerous sea crossing to Europe.

I am proud of the contribution the UK is making and the good we have already done. While I understand your support for the Lord Dubs amendment, I do believe that the approach set out by the Government provides the best way to support our European partners and focus on the most vulnerable in the conflict region.

Once again, many thanks for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Chris".

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY