



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

November 2018

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about asylum seekers and employment.

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.

Asylum seekers are allowed to work if their claim has not been decided after 12 months through no fault of their own. Those allowed to work are restricted to jobs on the shortage occupation list. This is a fair and reasonable policy, as it is important to protect the resident labour market and we must ensure that access to jobs is prioritised for British citizens and those with leave to remain here, which includes refugees.

The current policy strikes the right balance, being equitable towards asylum seekers, consistent with our international obligations while taking into account the rights and needs of our society as a whole.

I should also mention that fully furnished and equipped accommodation is provided to asylum seekers with no utility bills or Council Tax to pay. Access to healthcare and schooling is free. In addition, while it is important to be mindful of the cost to the taxpayer, I am aware that the Home Office periodically reviews cash payments to ensure they continue to meet essential living needs. Following such a review, the amount someone claiming asylum support is now £37.75 per week for each person in the household.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris".

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY