



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

February 2020

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about asylum seekers and refugee resettlement.

I continue to believe strongly that we need to do all we can to help the world's most vulnerable people. I agree with the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury who said that the resettlement of thousands of vulnerable refugees over the last four years is something the UK can be proud of. I also support the principle of family unity and I am glad that there already is a comprehensive framework for refugees and their families to be safely reunited in the UK.

The Prime Minister has been clear of the importance in ensuring that unaccompanied children who are seeking international protection in an EU Member State can continue to be reunited with specified family members in the UK as well as children in the UK with family in the EU. Indeed, you may be pleased to know that the Home Secretary has already written to the EU inviting discussions and negotiations to begin on this very issue.

I am very pleased and encouraged that in 2018, the UK received over 3,000 asylum claims from unaccompanied children, making the UK Europe's third-highest intake country. In addition, in the year ending September 2019, 6,035 family reunion visas were issued to children and partners of those granted humanitarian protection or refugee protection in our country.

Government policy on family reunion for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children has not changed. New Clause 37 has been tabled to clarify the role of Government and Parliament in negotiations. In short, the new clause removes the statutory requirement to negotiate. Instead, requires the Government to lay a statement before Parliament on its policy regarding arrangements for future family reunification for unaccompanied children between the UK and the EU.



A statutory obligation to negotiate with the EU does not itself lead to an agreement. This change will enable full flexibility during negotiations and continued family reunification of vulnerable children remains a Government priority.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris".

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY