

Mr Edward Timpson MP
Minister of State for Vulnerable Children and Families

Mr Robert Goodwill MP
Minister of State for Immigration

Dear Ministers,

I am writing to you as I am concerned about child refugees here in the UK. I welcome your commitment to publishing a strategy on safeguarding unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children.

I believe the separation of families can have a devastating impact on the lives of child refugees, including their rehabilitation from experiences of trauma, and their integration and development in their country of asylum.

Today, with more people forcibly displaced than at any time since World War 2, the world's shared duty to provide asylum is more important than ever. Family reunion provides a safe and legal route allowing people fleeing persecution to avoid dangerous journeys, which profit smugglers and others ready to exploit people in need of finding safety with their family.

However, children are the only refugees in our system denied the right to family reunion. This is despite the fact they have been through an asylum process in the same way as an adult and have as much right to international protection and to respect for their rights as refugees as any adult.

Given your department will be considering how to act in the best interests of unaccompanied children, I am writing to ask that the Department for Education and the Home Office work together to look again at the issue of child family reunion and allow children recognised as refugees the right to be reunited with their immediate family members.

Yours sincerely,