



The Educational
Institute of Scotland

To all MPs representing constituencies in Scotland

LF/KN/MPs081020
8 October 2020

By email

Dear Colleague

Unaccompanied Child Refugees

The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) is Scotland's largest trade union for teachers and lecturers in schools, colleges and universities. We have over 60,000 members, making up around 80% of teachers and lecturers working here in Scotland. Our policies are developed by serving teachers and lecturers and we have consistently campaigned for a more socially just Scotland and supporting refugees.

Following Monday's votes in the House of Lords in which a number of amendments to the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill were passed, I am writing to you to share our policy on unaccompanied child refugees. Earlier this year, EIS Council approved the following motion:

"That this Council affirms the right of unaccompanied child refugees to be reunited with family members living in the UK after Brexit and resolves to campaign with urgency for that right to be respected by the UK Government; this campaign to include communicating as soon as possible with the UK government and MPs representing Scottish constituencies on the details of this resolution, and seeking the support of other Trade Unions and third sector organisations, as appropriate, across the UK in having that right respected."

The amended Bill is now in the UK Government's hands, and it is feared that the UK Government will seek to overturn this amendment in the House of Commons in the future. The EIS urges you to vote to accept the House of Lord's amendments to ensure that the rights under UK law to family reunion, at present covered by EU legislation known as the Dublin III treaty, will continue after the transition period. This will ensure that unaccompanied child refugees may continue to be transferred to the UK to join close relatives.

The EIS echoes the sentiments of Lord Dubs, himself a former child refugee, who said; "The Commons now needs to do the right thing by these uniquely vulnerable children and support the amendment."

We believe that this Dubs Amendment for unaccompanied child refugees is consistent with national and international laws, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child should ensure that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in all

decisions and actions concerning child refugees. Furthermore, the EIS believes that the abandonment of this right would encourage child trafficking as there would be no lawful alternative.

We have long campaigned to support refugees, including specifically, child refugees. In 2019, the EIS supported Safe Passage's "Our Turn" campaign, by calling on local authorities across Scotland to pledge places for unaccompanied child refugees. The EIS has also produced Refugee and Migrant Welcome Packs to welcome young people to Scotland and produced separate guidance for teachers on challenging harmful myths and stereotypes related to immigration. Furthermore, the EIS has supported the Lighthouse Refugee Inclusion Education Programme here in Scotland.

We will be campaigning with a range of trade unions and third sector organisations in order to support the continuation of the right of unaccompanied child refugees to be reunited in the UK with close relatives.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Flanagan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Larry Flanagan
General Secretary