



October 2023

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the spending of our overseas aid budget on refugees.

The UK has an established asylum system for the most vulnerable people in the world. I have always believed that resettlement is vital as a safe and legal pathway for the protection of vulnerable refugees fleeing persecution.

It is right that the Government continues to offer safe pathways for those in need.

I appreciate your concern regarding the amount of Official Development Assistance that is being spent on refugees within the UK. However, the cost of supporting asylum seekers in the UK has increased very significantly following the establishment of schemes offering refuge to people from Afghanistan and Ukraine fleeing conflict.

Recognising the pressure these unforeseen costs place on the ODA budget, and the implications this would have for the UK's wider aid objectives, the Government provided additional ODA resources of £1 billion in 2022-23 and £1.5 billion in 2023-24 at the 2022 Autumn Statement. This will result in ODA spending exceeding 0.5% of gross national income (GNI) and restrict the impact in-donor costs would otherwise have had.

I am aware that the Independent Commission for Aid Impact has also called on the Government to adopt a more conservative approach to its reporting. However, all UK ODA spend is reported in line with the OECD Development Assistance Committee's (DAC's) rules on ODA.

I can assure you that the Government will continue to strike an appropriate balance between fiscal responsibility and its development objectives when managing these pressures. The Government remains committed to spending 0.7 per cent of GNI as ODA when the fiscal circumstances allow, as set out to Parliament in July 2021.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY