



To: The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Home Secretary
The Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP, Minister of State for Immigration

Copied to: Saj Zafar, Head of Engagement, Windrush Reform Program

Sent by email

12th April, 2019

Dear Home Secretary and Minister of State for Immigration,

Windrush Compensation Scheme

We are writing to urge you to improve the compensation scheme for the Windrush generation who suffered injustice under the government's "hostile environment" policy. While we welcome the announcement to create a compensation scheme, the scheme as currently proposed is inaccessible and will not bring justice to those affected.

The Windrush Generation and their children contributed significantly to rebuilding the country following the Second World War and continue to enrich social, economic, political and religious life of our country. The Windrush Scandal is a source of national shame. British citizens have been deported without any opportunity of defence. Others faced job losses and insurmountable healthcare costs due to government policy demanding increased immigration checks with a high burden of proof.

The Lambeth community played a key role in raising awareness of the shocking scandal and supporting residents affected. The Black Cultural Archives held surgeries to support those affected by immigration concerns and councillors have been working with residents affected for a number of years. In 2017 Cllr Sonia Winifred, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Culture, wrote to the Home Office and Jamaican High Commissioner urging the government to take action and last year then Leader of the Council, Cllr Lib Peck, wrote jointly with Helen Hayes MP and Chuka Umunna MP to the Prime Minister calling on the government to rectify the appalling situation. Helen Hayes MP has also raised the scandal in Parliament on numerous occasions.

Following the government's apology, Lambeth submitted to the government's consultation on the government's scheme and supported the "Widen Windrush" motion to ensure that any compensation scheme was extended to the children of Windrush and considered the wide range of impacts, including emotional, mental and financial, of the government's atrocious policies.

The government's apology and announcement to create a compensation scheme is welcome. However, the compensation scheme in its current form is insufficient to be truly fair and just for the Windrush generation. Sonia attended the Home Office's event



on the consultation scheme last week in Lambeth. The application form is very lengthy and complicated, so inaccessible to its claimants.

Representatives from the Home Office stated that they had formed a partnership with Citizens Advice to support people with their applications. However, the nature of the support is unclear and there were apparently no plans to expand the training to, for example, local authorities and charities whose staff regularly interact with people affected. As a local authority, Lambeth will want to provide necessary support to these affected in the community but require further information in order to confidently signpost applicants with the correct information.

Furthermore, simply having an advice service is insufficient. The government should pay for professional lawyers to support claimants throughout the process. Without accessible legal advice, people affected may be unable to claim or will fall victim to high legal costs – adding to the unacceptable burdens they have already experienced at the government's hands.

Therefore, we ask to you:

1. Clarify the nature of support offered by Citizens Advice to claimants. For example, will there be a specially trained legal team at each centre and will they be available during all business hours or at specified hours.
2. Commit that the government will provide claimants with accessible legal advice, either through Citizens advice or otherwise.
3. Send copies of the compensation application forms to all local authorities so we can distribute accordingly.

This scheme will affect a huge number of our residents and we want to make the scheme effective. Lambeth council officers we would be more than happy to meet with civil servants about concrete ways to improve the scheme given our local knowledge.

Nothing can ever right the wrongs for those affected by the government's mistakes, but a compensation scheme is a welcome step. We urge you to improve that the compensation scheme to include accessible legal advice for claimants to ensure that the scheme is fair and just for the Windrush generation who continue to enrich our communities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sonia Winifred".

Cllr Sonia Winifred
Cabinet Member for Equalities & Culture
Lambeth Council

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

Helen Hayes MP
Dulwich & West Norwood
constituency

