

New Cross-Government Working Group launched to address challenges faced by Windrush generation and their families

As part of the ongoing efforts to right the wrongs experienced by the Windrush generation, Home Secretary Priti Patel has today (Monday 22 June) launched the Windrush Cross-Government Working Group.

The Group, co-chaired by the Home Secretary and Bishop Derek Webley, brings together stakeholders and community leaders with senior representatives from a number of government departments to address the challenges faced by the Windrush generation and their descendants.

Progress is being made to right the wrongs, with more payments made every week under the Windrush Compensation Scheme.

However, there is much more to do. This Group will play an important role in ensuring the Government upholds its commitment to the Windrush generation.

The purpose of the Group is to:

- Provide strategic input into the Home Office's response to the Wendy Williams Lessons Learned Review
- Support the design and delivery of practical solutions to address the wider challenges that disproportionately affect people from Black and wider BAME backgrounds. This will include programmes on education, work and health
- Advise on the design and delivery of the Windrush Schemes Community Fund

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

This group is crucial to delivering on our promise to right the wrongs experienced by the Windrush generation and it is right that we advance these issues in a constructive, sensitive and responsible way.

We know that the best way to make sure we reach all those affected is by listening to them and hearing their voices, including how best to address the wider challenges that disproportionately affect those from BAME backgrounds.

From issues affecting education, work and health, this group will

support Government to deliver practical solutions as well as advising on the design of the Windrush Community Fund scheme and response to the Wendy Williams review.

What we need most now is action and I am excited to work in partnership with this group who themselves hold valuable experience within the community and are driven to bring the ultimate change that we all want to achieve, which is making a difference to people's lives.

Bishop Derek Webley, co-chair of the Windrush Cross-Government Working Group said:

It's an honour to be able to serve members of the Windrush generation who have served this country with dignity and pride, and helped to build this country over many years.

This Working Group recognises that the work we're doing can't be done without the voices of the community, and we will work with them and the government in finding a way forward that would meet the satisfaction of the Windrush community.

Group members include stakeholders and community leaders representing the affected communities, including Bishop Joe Aldred from Churches Together in England; Paulette Simpson, Executive Director of the Voice; Blondel Cluff, Chief Executive of the West India Committee and Kunle Olulode, Director of Voice4Change England. All members bring a balance of experience in community engagement and specific sector expertise.

Members also will include representation at a senior level from a number of government departments, including No10, the Home Office, the Department for Education, the Department of Health and Social Care, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department for Work and Pensions.

Member of the Group, Duwayne Brooks OBE said:

The Windrush generation were treated terribly by successive governments and it is time this is put right.

I am pleased that the government is committed to righting these wrongs and I am looking forward to working with the Home Secretary and others to ensure all those affected come forward to claim the compensation they deserve and get the support they need to move on.

Blondel Cluff CBE, who is also a member on the Group said:

We are at a seminal moment as a nation and as such I welcome the invitation to serve on the Cross-Government Windrush Group, particularly given the evident 'buy in' across government.

I trust that together we shall make tangible, positive, and sustainable progress on this critical matter.

The Home Office, as requested by Wendy Williams, is carefully considering the Lessons Learned Review. The Home Secretary has agreed to respond in full by the end of September and has also committed to provide an update to Parliament before summer recess.

The Group will play an important role in assisting with the Home Office's response by providing insight and guidance, as well as help to ensure that the lessons from the Windrush review are shared across government.

As announced by the Home Secretary in March, the Home Office will shortly launch a separate £500k Windrush Scheme Community Fund for grassroots organisations, to help improve uptake and awareness of the schemes supporting those who were directly affected. This includes the Windrush Scheme, which has so far provided over 12,000 people with documentation confirming their status. One of the first tasks for the Group will be to work with stakeholders to co-design and deliver this Fund.

To ensure that all those affected are reached, the Home Office is also launching a £750k targeted advertising campaign, using a range of channels, such as adverts and social media, to make sure those most affected around the UK are aware of the support available to them and know how to apply. The Government will work closely with stakeholders to ensure our campaign encourages as many people as possible to apply.

Grassroots activity, including recruiting community ambassadors nationally and in priority areas to encourage and support applications among their networks, is also being undertaken. More details on this activity will be announced in due course.

Black communities and wider minority ethnic communities still face injustices, and the Government is dedicated to tackling this, including by launching a cross-governmental commission into racial inequality. The Windrush Cross-Government Working Group will also have an instrumental role to play in this work, and in ensuring we address the wider challenges that disproportionately affect people from black and wider minority ethnic backgrounds. The Working Group will meet quarterly for the duration of the Windrush Compensation Scheme, which is currently open until April 2023. The date will be kept under review.

The Group will complement the Race Equality Commission, which is being set up

by Number 10 and will sit separately to this group.

For more information on the measures put in place to support the Windrush generation, please see our factsheet:

<https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/05/13/wind/>