

Press release: Annual day of celebrations for the Windrush Generation

A national Windrush Day backed by new government funding will take place on 22 June every year, encouraging communities across the country to celebrate the contribution of the Windrush Generation and their descendants, Communities Minister Lord Bourne announced today (18 June 2018).

The event will be overseen by a body of British Caribbean representatives and a Windrush Day grant of up to £500,000 will be available each year to charities and communities seeking to hold commemorative and educational events.

The British Caribbean community have been consulted widely to ensure the legacy and contribution of the Windrush Generation and their descendants is recognised and celebrated.

The announcement comes as the nation prepares for a range of Windrush 70 activities to commemorate the arrival of the Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks. A National Service of Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey on 22 June 2018 will form the centrepiece of events.

Communities Minister Lord Bourne said:

A Windrush Day will allow communities up and down the country to recognise and honour the enormous contribution of those who stepped ashore at Tilbury Docks 70 years ago. It will keep their legacy alive for future generations, ensuring that we all celebrate the diversity of Britain's history.

It is a truly proud moment as we start a week of exciting Windrush 70 events, headed by a National Service at Westminster Abbey, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Windrush.

70 years ago on 22 June 1948 the Empire Windrush landed at Tilbury Docks, Essex. The arrival of 492 passengers from the Caribbean marked a seminal moment in Britain's history, and has come to stand for the rich diversity of this nation.

The Windrush Generation made a huge contribution to rebuilding the country following the war and their settlement and their descendants have continued to enrich social, economic, political and religious life.

Windrush Foundation Director Arthur Torrington said:

The announcement of a national Windrush Day is a moment of great satisfaction. It will cement in the national consciousness the important contribution of those who travelled from the Caribbean to Britain 70 years ago to build a better life and participate in making Britain a stronger nation.

Their legacy has lived on in their children and grandchildren and the communities they have built across the country. For years to come, Windrush Day will bring people together to celebrate this vital part of our shared history and heritage.

Churches Together Dr Joe Aldred said:

The national service at Westminster Abbey to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the arrival of Empire Windrush marks a hugely important moment for the nation.

Over successive generations the British Caribbean community has shown resilience and contributed so much to British life. Windrush 70 will honour this contribution and the hugely positive impact the Windrush Generation and their descendants have had to make this country stronger.

Lambeth Councillor Sonia Winifred said:

Windrush 70 is not just a commemoration of the long journey made by several hundred people but recognition of their legacy which has changed all our lives – culturally, socially, economically and politically. As the Windrush 70 logo says, it's part of our DNA and nowhere more so than Lambeth.

Confirmation of the annual event forms part of the Windrush 70 campaign that will see celebratory activities including dance performances, exhibitions and debates continue throughout the year.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is funding a number of events, including the following:

- National Service of Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey
- AGE UK Windrush 70 tea party hosted by Lambeth Council
- Phoenix Dance Company performance of Windrush: Movement of the People at Lambeth Town Hall
- Commemorative 'platinum' pin badges designed by Brixton-based design group Champion Agency to be distributed at key Windrush 70 events throughout the country

www.windrush70.org will list a range of events taking place up and down the country.