

Windrush Day welcome chance to thank Welsh migrant community

On the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the Empire Windrush and her 492 passengers from the Caribbean, Ministers will today join friends from Race Council Cymru and Black History Month Elders at an event at the Senedd to acknowledge the contribution the Windrush generation have made to our country.

Leader of the House, Julie James will host the celebration, as part of a week of events to mark Refugee Week, to commemorate Windrush Day and recognise its wide historic and present-day significance.

The recent outpouring of support for the Windrush generation reflects the respect Welsh people hold for those who answered the call all those years ago to make Britain their home. While racism and discrimination still occurs within Wales, Julie James says we must continue to promote and safeguard our principles of fairness, inclusivity and equality.

“Today we pay tribute to the contributions made to Wales by the Windrush generation and their descendants, as well as the other migrant communities who came before and after. We thank them for their efforts and sacrifices over the generations. We will continue to welcome and embrace those from other places who seek to improve our communities and we will challenge discrimination faced by these communities wherever we find it” she said.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething, who is also speaking at the ceremony, said,

“Refugees have brought a wealth of experience and a range of skills and abilities to Wales, and our health service has benefitted immeasurably for it. 2018 is also the 70th anniversary of the NHS and it is difficult to imagine the continued success of our health system without the vital support of migrant communities and their descendants.”

Uzo Iwobi, CEO for Race Council Cymru and Chair of the All Wales Black History Network, said,

“It gives us great pleasure to work with Welsh Government and all the partner organisations to mark the 70th Anniversary of the Windrush migrants arrival and their contributions to Wales. It has been bitterly disappointing to see the manner in which some Windrush migrants are being treated by the UK government in recent months. This event is hosted by the Leader of the House and Chief

Whip Julie James AM to set a marker in the sands of time that makes a clear statement that Wales celebrates and values the contributions of our Black History Elders, the Windrush elders and their families who have given years of selfless services to the Welsh Society over the past 70yrs and more. Race Council Cymru also applauds the work and contributions of all commonwealth migrants and all migrants who continue to serve their communities, public, private and third sector organisations across Wales. Join us for a free event to celebrate our Windrush Elders and their families at the Senedd on the 22nd of June 2018.”

Margaret Thomas, UNISON regional secretary said,

“UNISON Cymru Wales is a proud sponsor of the 70th anniversary Windrush commemorations. That generation and their children have enriched Welsh life. The NHS also has its 70th birthday this year and we pay tribute to the contribution African-Caribbean workers and all immigrants have made to Welsh public services. The dedication and compassion they have shown throughout their lives contrasts with the unforgivable treatment the Windrush generation received at the hands of the UK Conservative government. That government has destroyed livelihoods and families threatening British citizens with deportation.

“In UNISON we aspire for the best, treating people with dignity and respect. We’re proud that Wales is a compassionate nation. We must continue to be tolerant and welcoming. We thank the Windrush generation for their support and contributions to our union, our communities and our country.”

Rocio Cifuentes Director of Ethnic Minorities Youth Support Team (EYST) said,

“EYST Wales welcomes this event to mark the arrival of people from the Caribbean to the UK. Caribbean people have made a huge and positive contribution to the UK and Wales, and we are very pleased to be supporting these important events in Cardiff and Swansea. We are pleased that Welsh Government and Local Authorities are also willing to contribute to these as this sounds an important message of solidarity and welcome to the diverse communities of Wales, which is so important particularly in current times when a divisive narrative can often be the loudest.”