



HM Government

# Minutes

<b>Meeting</b>	Windrush Cross-Government Working Group
<b>Date</b>	12 October 2020, 13.00 –14.30
<b>Venue</b>	Virtually via Zoom
<b>Co-Chairs</b>	Home Secretary, Rt Hon Priti Patel MP and Bishop Derek Webley MBE DL
<b>Attendees</b>	For a full list of attendees, please see Annex A.

## Welcome and introductions

1. The Home Secretary and Bishop Derek Webley opened the second meeting of the Cross-Government Working Group. In their opening remarks, both Chairs congratulated members of the Group who had received honours in the Queen's Birthday Honour's List: Paulette Simpson (for services to the Caribbean community in the UK); Kunle Olulode (for services to the BAME community during Covid-19); and Siobhan Sheridan (for services to Ministry of Defence Personnel) respectively.
2. Both Chairs welcomed the swift progress and achievements collectively made by the Group, through the three sub-groups that had been established. This covered a range of priorities – the Windrush Compensation Scheme, the Windrush communications campaign that had been launched in August, and the response to the Windrush Lessons Learned Review which signalled the reform of the Home Office. Bishop Webley highlighted the importance of the Group meeting during Black History Month, and of celebrating stories from across the country of the contribution of the Windrush generation and the work of grassroots community organisations in their support of communities. The Home Secretary and members welcomed the appointment of Matthew Rycroft, Permanent Secretary at the Home Office, as the new Civil Service Race Champion, which demonstrated the critical role of the Home Office in the diversity agenda.
3. Matthew Rycroft highlighted that the Group was coming together again at a pivotal moment, following the six-month anniversary of the Lessons Learned Review. Now the Comprehensive Improvement Plan had been published, the Group's input would remain essential in supporting the Home Office and wider Government in what more could be done.

## **The Windrush Lessons Learned Review, and the Comprehensive Improvement Plan**

4. The Group discussed progress made in responding to the Lessons Learned Review through publication of the Comprehensive Improvement Plan on 30 September, the work that would now be undertaken to fully implement the recommendations, and the lessons now to be drawn for learning across Government and the formation of cross-government roundtables and other forums (paper 1). The Improvement Plan grouped the 30 recommendations from the Review in 5 distinct themes: 1. Righting the Wrongs and Learning from the Past; 2. A More Compassionate Approach; 3. Inclusive and Rigorous Policy Making; 4. Openness to Scrutiny; and 5. An Inclusive Workforce.
5. The advice of the sub-group, Implementation of the Windrush Lessons Learned Review, and its members chaired by Duwayne Brooks had brought essential constructive direction and challenge to the response. The sub-group looked forward to continuing to build upon the relationships built with Home Office officials as the Improvement Plan was implemented. Members of the sub-group highlighted achievements and views for next steps.
6. *Responses to the Comprehensive Improvement Plan:* there had already been some positive responses from communities to the Improvement Plan and in particular the theme of creating a more compassionate approach, consolidating and simplifying the immigration rules and the standard of proof, and the delivery of training for civil servants across a number of areas including the history of immigration, the Equality and Human Rights Acts. It was noted that the West India Committee, led by Blondel Cluff, had provided educational material to the Home Office for dissemination, for example on the Home Office intranet.
7. *Righting the Wrongs and Learning from the Past:* The Group's support in advising the Home Office on the approach to recommendation 3 would continue to be invaluable as the Home Office designed and developed the events for early 2021. It was recognised that these events would play a critical role in building trust with communities and therefore taking the time to reflect and consult with the Group would be beneficial. It was noted that learning could be taken from previous events, for example the celebration of the 70th anniversary of Windrush held at Westminster Abbey in 2018. FCDO highlighted the role of all government departments in learning the lessons from the past, noting the response to the recent repatriation flights from Jamaica during Covid-19 and the reaction to support provided to those returning to the UK.
8. *A More Compassionate Approach, and Inclusive and Rigorous Policy Making:* The review of the compliant environment was welcomed, though it was noted that it would take some time to see the impacts of the review. The importance of alignment and consistency of approach across government was stressed in cases where policies in different departments could inadvertently be developed without regard to the collective impact on particular groups. Government representatives were also pressed to consider circumstances in which members of the public might fail to undertake actions needed to maintain their status in the

country, and the question of the potential protections needed to prevent consequential challenges of their human rights was raised.

### **Windrush Scheme and Windrush Compensation Scheme**

9. The Group received a paper setting out progress on the Windrush Scheme (documentation), Windrush Compensation Scheme, recent communications activities and further plans for engagement and outreach (paper 2). The amount of compensation had been increasing with over £2.5 million having been paid or offered at the end of August 2020. Further progress in supporting the Windrush generation continued – over 13,300 documents have been provided to over 11,500 individuals confirming their status or British citizenship, and the Vulnerable Persons Team continued to provide support to those in need having supported 1,568 individuals at the end of August 2020. Changes continued to be made to the Compensation Scheme, based on the ongoing feedback from stakeholders and those impacted. The Home Office had made a number of changes designed to improve the generosity, simplicity and speed of the Scheme and would continue to make changes where needed, including drawing up on support from other government departments and called upon the Group's support in ensuring that improvements were communicated as widely as possible.
10. The work of the sub-group, Windrush Community Funds and Windrush Schemes, chaired by Paulette Simpson had continued at pace, advising on the Home Office's communications, engagement and outreach activities in addition to co-designing the Community Fund to raise awareness of the Windrush Scheme and Compensation Scheme. The sub-group had drawn upon the insights from across government, working with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and would also be working with the Ministry of Defence in the coming weeks to ensure the widest reach possible across communities in the UK and also overseas. Building the most appropriate narrative and language had been central to the sub-group's work, and the messaging around the Schemes would continue as a priority. Clarity around the different Windrush Schemes was essential, and the language that would resonate with communities at a grassroots level was critical to reaching those the Government had not yet reached, and in allaying fears and building trust. Public perception was discussed as an ongoing challenge, both in light of the understanding how many people had been impacted and the need to rebuild trust.
11. While focus tended to be concentrated on the Compensation Scheme, it was noted that the Windrush Scheme, that supports affected people to secure documentation, had a significant role – securing documentation was of vital importance and the sub-group were committed to working closely with their networks to support the Windrush Scheme.
12. More progress would continue to be made, with the continued development and launch of the Community Fund and engagement and outreach activity. FCDO committed support from its overseas posts and work with High Commissions to

support the Home Office in its activities and engagement. All members (stakeholders and government representatives) were invited to support the Home Office in amplifying its messages, and for additional suggestions for engagement with specific sectors or organisations by Monday 26 October.

### **Changing the narrative of the Windrush generation**

13. The Group received an overview of the work underway in the sub-group, Collaboration with the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, chaired by Blondel Cluff. There was a wide-ranging discussion that touched upon a number of themes, including the role of wider government in supporting the Windrush generation. Reference was also made of work in-hand by both Kunle Olulode and Blondel Cluff as co-opted members of the Commission with focus on employment and education respectively, with Blondel advising of a national initiative that was being undertaken by The West India Committee, and The Royal Mint that would progress the issue of the national curriculum.
14. *Employment (Procurement)*: It was noted that there were links between the work of the Commission and sub-group in reviewing public sector procurement and the work underway in reviewing social value in government procurement. There are opportunities to build capacity and benefit Windrush communities, through the work of the sub-group and Commission to maximise the impact of current work on digital inclusion, shaping contracts, and embedding social value in training of government commercial and procurement functions. The use of dormant assets could also be explored as a way to build capacity.
15. *Education*: The scrutiny of the term “BAME” to capture a wide breadth of communities was raised and whether this generated a simplification when considering and addressing the particular challenges faced by different groups and individuals. For example, there are distinctly different experiences of African children when compared to their Caribbean counterpart that were benefitting less from the education system. In addition, the more nuanced experiences of citizens of the British Overseas Territories with immigration was noted as was the paucity of knowledge of the members of the British family of nations in general, including the Territories and Crown Dependencies that is reflected in their treatment. The potential role of education in addressing this was discussed. Participation of large cultural institutions would be just as valuable as that of smaller community-led institutions, and the sub-group looked forward to working closely with DCMS in this respect. It was noted that in training officials on BAME communities, it would also be important to capture the full breadth of departments in this work, for example legal departments and enforcement bodies, together with any agencies to which implementation is delegated.
16. *Narrative*: moving the narrative of the Windrush generation towards one of celebration and bringing the positive contributions of the Windrush generation to the forefront would continue to be paramount to the work of the Group and the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities. A range of policy areas, including education, would be key to this and to ensuing this happened with great care and sensitivity. DfE highlighted the role that the curriculum could play, and the value

of the use of different educational settings for amplifying specific messages, including those relating to the Windrush Schemes. FCDO highlighted the essential value in teaching UK history to diplomats and all civil servants.

### **Closing remarks**

17. Bishop Webley thanked all members for their contributions, and invited all members to share any additional reflections and comments with the secretariat following the meeting. He thanked Martin Forde QC for his contributions as the Independent Advisor to the Windrush Compensation Scheme and the support and advice he had provided to the Group. On behalf of the Home Secretary, Matthew Rycroft added his thanks for the Group's contributions and advice – there was more to take away and progress around a range of issues in addition to the work on the Compensation Scheme. While the Group would next meet in early 2021, work would continue in righting the wrongs and supporting the Windrush generation.

### **Actions**

1. Work of the sub-groups to continue, with government representatives, with regular meetings already scheduled. (Secretariat to follow up with government representatives)
2. Home Office to consider the most effective way to disseminate the educational material provided by the West India Committee.
3. All members (stakeholders and government representatives) to feed back on the proposed engagement plans by Monday 26 October. (Secretariat to collate responses)

## Annex A: List of attendees

### Co-chairs:

Home Secretary, Rt Hon Priti Patel MP and Bishop Derek Webley MBE DL

### Stakeholder members:

Bishop Dr Joe Aldred (Pentecostal and Multicultural Relations, Churches Together in England)

Duwayne Brooks (Managing Director, Active Community Engagement and Development)

Blondel Cluff (Chief Executive, West India Committee)

Loanna Morrison (Journalist and founder of London Apprenticeship Fair)

Arike Oke (Managing Director, Black Cultural Archives)

Kunle Olulode (Director, Voice4Change England)

Dr Tony Sewell (Chief Executive, Generating Genius; Chair of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities)

Paulette Simpson (Executive Director, 'The Voice')

### Independent Adviser to the Windrush Compensation Scheme

Martin Forde QC

### Government representatives:

Matthew Rycroft (Permanent Secretary, Home Office)

Mark Davies (Director, Population Health, DHSC)

Ian Coates (Director, Higher Education, DfE)

Becky Morrison (Director, Office for Civil Society, DCMS)

Siobhan Sheridan (Director, Civilian HR, MOD)

Hugo Shorter (Director, Americas, FCDO)

Julia Sweeney (Director, Local Government and Communities, MHCLG)

Jean Wilson (Deputy Director, Service Planning and Delivery, DWP)

Abi Tierney (Director General, UKVI, Home Office)

Kate Ridley-Moy (Deputy Director, Windrush Lessons Learned Review Implementation Team, Home Office)

Alison Samedi (Deputy Director, Windrush Policy and Engagement, Home Office)

Ben Biddulph (Windrush Communications, Home Office)

Khobi Vallis (Home Secretary's Private Secretary)

Phoebe Jacobson (Home Office Permanent Secretary's Private Secretary)

Amrit Bangard (Secretariat, Home Office)

Mimi Kojaković (Secretariat, Race Disparity Unit)

Edward Donkor (Secretariat, Race Disparity Unit)

Apologies: Marcus Bell (Director, Race Disparity Unit); Summer Nisar (Deputy Director, Race Disparity Unit, Cabinet Office); Michael Warren (Director, Labour Markets, BEIS)