

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

June 2021

Dear Constituents

Thank you for your email about the Windrush Debate in Parliament.

While I was unable to attend yesterday's important Windrush Debate in Parliament, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Windrush generation. These men and woman came to the UK, built their lives here and enriched our communities. To put it simply, members of the Windrush generation made the United Kingdom a more successful place and are rightly a central part of our great national story.

However, over several decades the members of the Windrush generation were not treated with the respect they deserved. I fully accept that some members of the Windrush generation suffered great injustices over many decades at the hands of successive Governments. This was wrong.

The Government has rightly stated that nothing can reverse the pain inflicted on the Windrush Generation. However, I do welcome the firm commitment by Ministers to do everything possible to right these wrongs and ensure this can never happen again.

I would like to reassure you if an individual is settled in the UK but does not have a document to prove it, they may be eligible to apply to the 'Windrush Scheme'. This means they may be able to apply for a document to prove they can live and work in the UK. This is the case if one of the following is true - they came to the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973, their parents came to the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973 or they came to the UK from any country before 31 December 1988 and are now settled here. Individuals may also be entitled to apply for citizenship for free if they are a Commonwealth citizen who settled in the UK before 1 January 1973, or are the child of someone who did.

As you will be aware, the Home Secretary received the Windrush Lessons Learned Review from independent adviser Wendy Williams and published the report at the earliest opportunity. The report is clear, lessons must be learned at all levels and by all political parties. I agree that this is a national scandal and must be treated as such.

The Independent Advisor suggests that the Home Secretary gives careful consideration to the findings outlined in the report. I agree entirely that a detailed formal response must not be rushed to allow for the most difficult questions to be asked and answered. I welcome that the Home Secretary has said that she will be accepting the recommendations made in full.

Member of Parliament for Darlington

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I understand your concerns regarding the need for those who deserve compensation to receive it as soon as possible. The Home Secretary has reassured me that the Home Office is processing claims as quickly as possible. It is extremely welcome that following feedback the Home Office has made a number of improvements to the scheme. This includes raising the minimum award from £250 to £10,000 for anyone who can show an impact on their life under the terms of the scheme. In addition, raising the maximum award an individual can receive for an impact on their life from £10,000 to £100,000 and options for higher awards in exceptional circumstances. I was reassured to hear that all changes will be applied retrospectively.

I sincerely hope this process can mark the beginning of a new chapter at the Home Office where no one is made to feel unwelcome in their own country.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours Sincerely
Peter Gibson

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