



**Black Equity  
Organisation**

# **HOMES LOST, LIVES SHATTERED**

## **The Windrush Housing Scandal**

### **Executive summary**

The Home Office Windrush Scandal is one of the most serious failures of the British state – a systemic national injustice in which tens of thousands of people who had the legal right to call the United Kingdom home were wrongly classified as illegal immigrants. The impacts are far-reaching, and some victims have passed away before receiving justice.

This report examines the profound and lasting housing-related consequences of that failure. Without urgent action, Windrush survivors will continue to face displacement,

instability and the erosion of the lives they built in Britain. The impact goes far beyond one generation: inaction entrenches intergenerational disadvantage – in an already unequal Britain – and signals that the state bears no obligation to remedy the harms it has caused.

To explore the experiences of those affected by the Scandal, we interviewed six Windrush survivors and four Windrush justice advocates.

### **Key findings**

- Survivors have experienced a loss of identity and displacement due to housing and citizenship issues caused by the Home Office Windrush Scandal.
- The Windrush Scandal has been wrongly treated as a collection of individual and isolated cases as opposed to a systemic national failure, placing the burden of proof of citizenship on survivors. This intentional mischaracterisation has allowed injustices to go unaddressed.

- The consequences of housing instability do not exist in isolation. Survivors' inability to access secure housing has compounded disadvantage across multiple areas of their lives – including their ability to access NHS services and employment – with knock-on effects for education and intergenerational outcomes.

## Summary of recommendations

Two key recommendations were identified, grounded in a wider pool of recommendations from both interviews and stakeholder roundtable discussions:

- 1. All councils and housing departments should implement Mandatory Windrush training and written guidance**, funded by central government and monitored by a dedicated Windrush task force in each council. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) should oversee compliance and use its enforcement powers where authorities

fall short. Guidance should cover how to identify Windrush survivors, understanding why conventional documentation may not exist, how to handle cases where documentation is limited without disadvantaging applications, and training to embed anti-discrimination practice.

## **2. The government should abolish the Right to Rent scheme.**

This scheme has been found to cause discrimination and harm to Windrush survivors and ethnic minorities at large in the private rented sector. The Home Office should lead in dismantling the scheme in coordination with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), with the EHRC overseeing the process and enforcing.

## **3. The government should establish an independent body to administer the Windrush Compensation Scheme.**

Alongside the call for an independent investigation, participants believed that

the compensation scheme should not be administered by the Home Office. Many felt that the scheme would be better run by a separate department. This relates to concerns around conflict of interest, with the Home Office mistrusted and considered unfit to administer the compensation scheme for a scandal which it was responsible for creating and to make fair determinations of eligibility or restitution. An independent body should be set up to lead the scheme, with expertise in compensation and assets evaluation to ensure fair awards are granted. Caseworkers should not rule on decisions without talking to the survivors: our participants expressed concerns that currently, *'caseworkers sit behind a desk and make decisions without having a conversation with you'* (Faye). The compensation scheme and the Windrush scheme at large are in desperate need of revision and removal from the Home Office.

---

**4. The Windrush Commissioner and the Home Office should work with African High Commissions to notify and assist African Windrush survivors, especially those locked out of the UK.**

One demographic extensively impacted by the two-year lapse in ILR is African Windrush survivors of the Windrush generation. This population has been disproportionately under-represented in Windrush claims and scheme applications. Addressing this gap should include the establishment of a working group comprising High Commissions, tasked with identifying, contacting and supporting Windrush survivors from African countries. This strategy would mirror the diplomatic approach taken by the CARICOM nations.<sup>1</sup>

1 Embassy Networking for Diplomats (n.d.). Diplomatic push wins Windrush rights. <https://embassymagazine.com/diplomatic-push-wins-windrush-rights>.

### Next steps

As part of the second phase of this project, Black Equity Organisation (BEO) will work in collaboration with members of the Windrush community, housing advocates and Windrush advocates to push for a commitment from all councils and housing authorities to implement mandatory training and clear guidance. The goal of this campaign is to ensure that council staff can identify Windrush survivors and support them into suitable housing. To learn more or participate in the campaign, please visit <https://blackequityorg.com/windrush-legacy> or email [research@blackequityorg.com](mailto:research@blackequityorg.com).

**You can read more about this project here: [www.blackequityorg.com](http://www.blackequityorg.com)**

**Follow us on our socials:**

**Instagram: [@blackequityorg](https://www.instagram.com/blackequityorg)**

**LinkedIn: [Black Equity Organisation](#)**

**Sign up to our newsletter for updates [here](#)**