



Windrush Generation

Who were they?

Between 1948 and 1970, nearly half a million people moved from the Caribbean to Britain. After WWII, Britain encouraged immigration from Commonwealth countries. To a large extent this was to help rebuild the country as there was a shortage of labour at the time. Many African-Caribbean people migrated to North America and Europe, especially to the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands.

The name 'Windrush' derives from the 'HMT Empire Windrush' ship which brought one of the first large groups of Caribbean people to the UK in 1948.

What happened?

Many of the Windrush generation arrived as children on their parents' passports. Home Office destroyed thousands of landing cards and other records, many lacked the documentation to prove their right to remain in the UK. The Home Office also placed the burden of proof on individuals to prove their residency predated 1973. The Home Office demanded at least one official document from every year they had lived here. Attempting to find documents from decades ago created a huge, and in many cases, impossible burden on people who had done nothing wrong.

Falsely deemed as 'illegal immigrants' / 'undocumented migrants' they began to lose their access to housing, healthcare, bank accounts and driving licenses. Many were placed in immigration detention, prevented

from travelling abroad and threatened with forcible removal, while others were deported to countries they hadn't seen since they were children.

Their harmful and unjust treatment provoked widespread condemnation of government's failings on the matter, with calls being made for radical reform of the Home Office and the UK's immigration policy. In response to these demands, then Home Secretary, Sajid Javid announced in May 2018 that the Home Office would commission a 'Windrush Lessons Learned Review'.

Does this still effect nowadays?

YES! The Windrush generation are still waiting for their justice. In addition to this, the policies that led this scandal are still in place. Policies such as the 'Hostile Environment' – a policy that bars those without the right papers from the safety net we all rely on. A policy that has not even been suspended despite the pandemic we are living in.

To conclude, if you've read up to here, the knowledge does not just stop here, this is a brief summary and fact file. Educate yourself on the past that filters into our present day. I want to leave you with this quote from the Daily Mail 2018,

"Despite having lived here and paid taxes for decades, some [Commonwealth-born people] have lost their homes, jobs and benefits, been denied NHS treatment and been threatened with deportation...[...]"

This is happening in Britain, please learn and research and sign petitions so that the Windrush Generation finally get their justice.