



Dame Diana Johnson MP
Chair, Home Affairs Select Committee Chair
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

07 July 2022

Dear Dame Diana,

Home Affairs Select Committee visit to the Windrush Compensation Scheme

Thank you for your letter dated 21 June 2022, following your visit to the Windrush Compensation Scheme offices in Sheffield on 14 June 2022.

I am pleased this was an informative and interesting visit and our teams' commitment to their roles came across. The teams in turn welcomed the opportunity to walk you through the journey a claimant will make through our process. The teams were also pleased you noted their work to reach out to support vulnerable claimants and how they continuously consider how policies can be improved.

I know the sessions involved full and open discussions, though note there has been a misunderstanding about the number and location of claims in our work in progress. Work in progress (WiP) is defined in our published Windrush Compensation Scheme Transparency data as: "*claims at Registration, Eligibility, Triage, Casework and QA stages, excluding anything at payment, Tier 1 and Tier 2.*"

Our teams have reflected on how they can be clearer with descriptions and how we can explain our data more effectively.

The Head of the Windrush Compensation Scheme wrote to the Committee on 21 June 2022 sharing the slides from the session, which set out our progress to end of March 2022. He also clarified the position about outstanding claims, explaining there were a total 1,904 claims at all stages of the casework process, as at end of April 2022. The Second Permanent Secretary also offered clarification at the Home Affairs Select Committee Hearing on 22 April 2022 at 11:25;

"I am sorry if I did not help the Committee with my attempts to explain the difference between the pre-2020 cases and the pre-2021 cases, but just to be very clear, there is not a queue of 1,800 cases that is sitting waiting. These are all part of our workflow and are at different stages, which I am very happy to set out in writing, but there is not an untouched backlog of 1,800 cases in our system."

I am pleased to be able to clarify this in writing. Our teams remain committed to accuracy and transparency. Any incorrect interpretation can undermine the trust in the Home Office that our teams have been working hard to rebuild and may inadvertently cause undue stress to claimants.

I can confirm there are not 1,800 cases awaiting allocation. As at the end of April 2022 the compensation work in progress stood at 1,904 claims which will have been at all stages of the casework process including Registration, Eligibility, Triage, Casework and QA stages. I have included a detailed outline of work in progress, together with answers to the wider questions you have raised at Annex A.

I hope this response will provide assurance to the Committee that this Government and our Windrush teams remain focused on paying the maximum compensation available at the earliest point possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Foster', with a large flourish at the end.

Kevin Foster MP
Minister for Safe and Legal Migration

Work in progress

Work in Progress (WiP) is defined in our published Windrush Compensation Scheme Transparency data at note 12 as: -“*claims at Registration, Eligibility, Triage, Casework and QA stages, excluding anything at payment, Tier 1 and Tier 2.*”

The overall number of claims outstanding shown in the Transparency data¹ - WiP at all stages of the casework process was (tab WCS_01):

March 2022: 1859 claims, as discussed in the visit
April 2022: 1904 claims

Transparency data also shows that at the end of April 2022 a total of 3,878 claims have been received. Of these, a final decision had been made on 1,921 (50%) claims. The total amount paid or offered had increased to £48.7m (tab WCS_03).

The WiP figure of 1,904 is the remaining 50% of the total claims received, and these claims were at all stages of the casework process.

Stages of our process

There are several active stages to processing claims.

The Committee understood why claims are allocated in date order. Some of the claims in our WiP will only have been received recently; the age of cases in our WiP is also set out in the Transparency data (WCS_05 refers).

All claims where eligibility has been confirmed will have an initial assessment by a caseworker within six weeks to establish whether a Preliminary payment can be made on the information available, and a confirmation letter will be issued.

Training and Mentoring

As of 23 June 2022, we had 124 EO caseworkers in post. 46 of those caseworkers are still completing training or mentoring. Caseworkers completing 2 weeks classroom training will not make decisions on live claims.

However, caseworkers during the 12 weeks mentoring are assigned live claims and start to make decisions, each claim is checked by an experienced caseworker. All caseworkers will be subject to 100% checking and mentoring until they are signed off as competent. Once signed off, they will remain subject to the normal quality sampling process.

Claim Assistance

The Compensation Scheme was designed to be accessible to anyone applying without the need for legal advice or assistance. The Primary Claim Form was redesigned - May 2021, in collaboration with stakeholders. This included obtaining the Crystal Mark, demonstrating our commitment to clarity, and communicating with claimants using plain English. Caseworkers also work with claimants to gather information on their behalf.

We commissioned an independent specialist organisation – We Are Digital (WAD), to provide support to claimants to complete the claim forms. We work closely with WAD to ensure their

¹ [Windrush Compensation Scheme data: April 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/107447/Windrush-Compensation-Scheme-data-April-2022.pdf)

service is accessible to all those who want to use it, and we continue to evaluate the service, ensuring we can provide the best support possible to claimants.

Our preliminary review did not indicate that those who have accessed legal support secured higher compensation awards in comparison to those who applied independently. We remain committed to understanding how we can better support claimants through their claim journey, and we continue to evaluate our processes and our offer of support.

Overseas Outreach

Over the last 12 months the Home Office Windrush Engagement Team has engaged with British High Commissioners (BHCs) overseas from both the Caribbean and wider Commonwealth communities including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Ghana, and Nigeria, to deliver bespoke staff and public awareness sessions to promote the Windrush Scheme and the Windrush Compensation Scheme overseas. We also provided the BHCs with communications materials, including information leaflets and videos recorded in key languages, for them to communicate through their networks and contacts to raise awareness of the Schemes.

Signpost Financial Advice

We continue to review our processes and are committed to providing the best support for claimants that we can. We are currently evaluating how we can best signpost claimants for additional assistance or specialist support once their claim has been concluded and where a need has been identified. Claimants can also continue to access help and support from our Vulnerable Persons Team, should they wish to.