

Committee of Public Accounts

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Matthew Rycroft CBE
Permanent Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
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21 September 2020

Dear Matthew,

Thank you for the evidence that you and Charu Gorasia provided to the Committee of Public Accounts on 10 September 2020 on the Windrush compensation scheme. We are writing to you jointly because of the Home Affairs Select Committee's continuing interest in this and the Chair's involvement in the Committee session.

We explored a number of areas where the Home Office still has more to do to fully compensate people whose lives have been badly damaged by the Home Office. We were disappointed that you were unable to provide the Committee with some basic facts about the current status of the Windrush compensation scheme. Given how seriously Parliament takes the Windrush scandal, and given the statements you have made about the determination of the Home Office to right its wrongs, we were particularly concerned that you were not able to provide the specifics as part of the normal process of Parliamentary accountability.

Please write to us within one month to provide further information in the following areas:

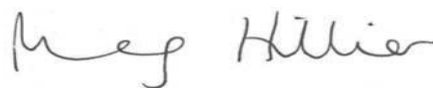
- The number of **compensation claims processed to date from nonCaribbean Commonwealth citizens**, along with the date when the Home Office began to contact these individuals to promote the compensation scheme. While we are pleased that the Home Office has accepted the recommendations from Wendy Williams's review and from this Committee, to focus on Commonwealth citizens beyond the Caribbean as well as Caribbean citizens, we are keen to understand at what pace this is being implemented.
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- The Home Office's **forecast of the expected costs of the Windrush compensation scheme**. In our session there appeared to be a discrepancy between your overall forecast of £90-250 million expenditure on some 11,500 eligible claims and the current rate of spend. You told us that £1million had been spent on 143 claimants, accounting for around 10% of claims, which would mean a total expenditure of some £10-20 million if other claims are settled for the same average amount. Please explain this apparent discrepancy between your overall analysis and the actual payments to date, and also provide us with: ○ the average compensation payment to date;

- the date at which the Home Office expects to have settled half of the current active cases;
- how many interim payments have been made to date.
- **The action you are taking to compensate people who have lost permanent council housing tenancies as a result of Home Office action.** Local authorities do not have empty properties available to give to these individuals. We suggest that some of the compensation scheme should be used to fund local authorities to buy houses for these individuals, rather than making them join long local housing queues.
- The Home Office approach to the **burden of proof for compensation claims, particularly in relation to the case of Anthony Williams.** As we discussed, Mr Williams lost his job after only a few weeks in post, due to the Home Office informing his employer incorrectly that he did not have the right to work in the UK. He could not work for five years, but was only eligible for one year of compensation since his employer had not given him any payslips which he could use as evidence of lost income. Under the compensation scheme rules, a general award for loss of access to employment is capped at a maximum of £1,147 a month for 12 months. You committed to look at his case again and also to review the wider principle of whether the Home Office has been asking for too much evidence, especially in cases such as Mr Williams', where the Department has caused the problem in the first place. Please inform the Committee about the results of this review.

We look forward to receiving this information. Both our Committees will maintain our keen interest in the progress of the Windrush compensation scheme.

I am copying this letter to the Comptroller and Auditor General and to the Treasury Officer of Accounts.

Yours sincerely,



Meg Hillier CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS



Yvette Cooper CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS