



Home Office

Shona Dunn
Second Permanent
Secretary

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Dear Chair,

I am writing to inform you that the Home Office has today laid a Statutory Instrument which amends the knowledge of the English language and knowledge of life in the UK requirements for people applying for British citizenship under the Windrush Scheme.

The Home Office is committed to righting the wrongs suffered by the Windrush generation. We are continuing to work closely with communities to identify those affected and to resolve their status and compensate those that have suffered impacts and losses. The Home Secretary has promised to reform the culture of the Home Office to better represent all of the communities we serve, and on 30 September, she published a Comprehensive Improvement Plan. The Plan sets out the work underway across the Home Office, to deliver lasting and meaningful change in response to the recommendations set out in the Windrush Lessons Learned Review.

The Windrush Scheme, launched in May 2018, ensures that members of the Windrush generation who had difficulty demonstrating their status are supported to receive a document confirming this, or British citizenship, free of charge. To the end of August, over 13,300 documents had been provided to over 11,500 individuals confirming their status. This includes over 6,300 grants of British citizenship.

In June 2019, the Windrush Scheme was expanded so that 'returned' residents and their eligible children, would also be entitled to a free citizenship application under the Scheme. This is a group of people that were settled in the UK on 1 January 1973 and subsequently spent two or more years living overseas, but who have retained strong ties to the UK and have now returned and regained settled status.

This Statutory Instrument ensures that those returned residents and their eligible children, will automatically meet the knowledge of language and life in the UK requirements when applying for British citizenship under the Scheme. This means that they will no longer need to take the Life in the UK test or obtain a language qualification in order to gain British citizenship. This is in line with the existing position for members of the Windrush generation that have remained continuously resident in the UK.

Yours sincerely,

Shona Dunn
Second Permanent Secretary