

Windrush compensation scheme overhauled



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The Home Secretary has always been clear that she will listen to feedback to make the Scheme as effective as possible so that everyone eligible for compensation receives the money they deserve.

Individuals affected by Windrush will now receive a minimum of £10,000 compensation through the Impact on Life category once their claim has been approved. This is 40 times the minimum award currently available. This will be paid as a new early preliminary payment as soon as someone applying on their own behalf or on behalf of a deceased relative can show any impact on their life under the terms of the Scheme. They won't have to wait for their whole application to be assessed.

In addition, the Home Secretary has significantly increased payments at all levels within the Impact on Life category with the maximum available rising from £10,000 to £100,000 for eligible cases, with an option to go higher in exceptional circumstances. These higher level awards will be made once the whole application has been assessed.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Today I am announcing significant changes to the Windrush Compensation Scheme so that those affected will now receive significantly more money, much more quickly.

I have always said that I will listen and act to help those who suffered terrible injustices and today's changes are an important step in rebuilding trust and moving forward together.

The Home Office will start to issue some offers of preliminary payments this week and will begin making payments under the new rules from 1 January 2021 . We will ensure that:

individuals directly affected themselves and their families and estates who have a pending applications will be considered for either a preliminary or final payment in the first 3 months of 2021

we will begin to review all cases where an offer or payment has already been made and increase that in line with the new rules. Applicants will be advised of the timeframes involved

we are also removing the 12-month cap on compensation for lost earnings meaning that people will be compensated for the actual period that they were out of work in all circumstances

full details on eligibility and guidance on the changes will be published following the announcement

Permanent Secretary Matthew Rycroft said:

The Windrush Compensation Scheme needed to be improved so victims receive the compensation they rightfully deserve as quickly as possible and at the right level.

We are making significant changes so individuals won't have to wait for their whole application to be assessed before they start receiving money.

We will continue to listen to anyone affected by Windrush to ensure the scheme works for them.

Bishop Derek Webley said:

The Windrush Working Group is glad to have collaborated with the Home Office and others to support these important and much needed changes to the existing compensation scheme, and are delighted that they will be implemented so swiftly.

Many will benefit from the relief that these new payments will provide, and begin to move forward with their lives with hope and determination.

The current compensation scheme was set up at pace and became operational in April 2019 so claims could be assessed immediately. It has paid out more than £2 million and a

further £1 million has been offered.

From the outset of the scheme, caseworkers have been instructed to ensure everyone who makes a claim receives the maximum compensation possible under the Scheme's rules. This is continuing with the revamped scheme.

Today, the Home Office has also opened the £500,000 Windrush Community Fund for bids.

Community and grassroot organisations can bid for up to £25,000, in two separate phases, to make sure all people affected by Windrush are aware of the support available through the Windrush Compensation Scheme and Windrush Scheme.

Voice4Change England will be administering the fund. They work with a large number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community groups and partners across the UK.

In addition, We Are Digital have been announced as the new claimant assistance provider for the Windrush Compensation Scheme. We Are Digital will deliver the assistance through their strong links with community organisations such as libraries, town halls and religious groups who will support individuals going through the compensation scheme application process.

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