

WHAT'S HAPPENING.

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THE 'TRULY APPALLING' TREATMENT OF THE WINDRUSH GENERATION



“Only recently, I was at the home office reporting centre in Salford representing a man who came to the UK when he was four. He is now 45. He has been detained in Yarl’s Wood Immigration Removal Centre twice,

he has no right to work, no right to the NHS and no right to benefits. He is just one of the thousands who came to this country as part of the Windrush generation and, like many others, he is still suffering.”

These were the words of a National Black Members' Committee member speaking to continue to support those affected by the Windrush scandal.

UNISON Conference condemned the Tory government's actions over Windrush as 'institutionally racist' and said that home secretaries, in particular, were responsible for the many individual tragedies that had occurred as a result.

There are still 34 people who were deported as a result of Windrush who have disappeared and cannot be found. These are UK citizens who have been heartlessly deported to places they left many decades previously. Their children have been badly affected too. Having come to Britain on the passports of their parents, they have also been forced to stop work, without recourse to public funds.

Cases are continuing to mount up of individuals seeking NHS treatment, passports, jobs or housing – only to find themselves having to prove their right to live in the country where they have been legally resident for more than 50 years. Otherwise they face deportation.

"It's a nightmare for those caught up in the scandal and it isn't over yet," said Ash Dhobie, Chair of the Black Members' Committee.

Carol Johnson of Bedfordshire Police added: "When Theresa May announced her resignation, some people said we should feel sorry for her. But where was her compassion when she introduced her immigration policy that led to this scandal?"

In 2014, Theresa May as home secretary, produced the new immigration policy, which created a hostile environment by forcing landlords, employers, banks and the NHS to run immigration status checks.

It also allowed people to be deported more quickly and avoided lengthy appeal processes. The policy was extended further in 2016.

Despite the devastation caused, "the government has done nothing other than offer scant apologies," said Mr Dhobie.

UNISON has made submissions to the government's compensation scheme and Lessons Learnt in 2018. The union also believes there should be no cap on the compensation scheme, given the scale of the damage inflicted.

"How can the government start to rebuild trust if it is not more open about the amount of compensation that can be paid?" said another speaker. "Money can never compensate for the loss of dignity, the loss of opportunities and, in extreme cases, loss of life, experienced – but it can help."

National conference supported a motion to continue to support members who are part of the Windrush generation and to build alliances with other organisations, such as the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, to help fund and support victims of the immigration crisis through the legal process.

Caroline Pinter transport branch, Yorkshire, speaking in favour of the motion, concluded by saying: "I share my anger that innocent people have been attacked in a heartless fashion. Migrants who came to Britain after the Second World War to fill jobs and rebuild the country, don't want thanks. They just want the right to an ordinary decent life."