Twitter Thread by Windrush Lives



Windrush Lives
@WindrushLives

In January, we wrote to @pritipatel on behalf of 31 claimants, several standing in for their deceased parents, calling for the Windrush Compensation Scheme to be taken away from the Home Office on account of its comprehensive failure: [1/35]

It wasn't just that the Scheme *wasn't working*; claimants had begun to get the sense that @ukhomeoffice was deliberately setting them up to fail, and being deliberately dishonest in its promises as to reform and meaningful change. [2/35]

On 14 Dec, @ukhomeoffice had announced a package of reforms to the Scheme. These reforms were said to be the fruit of the sincere efforts of HO staff in listening to the complaints victims and stakeholders had been making for well over a year. [3/35] https://t.co/GJxU58QcOm

A big part of the "overhaul" was the promise of Preliminary Awards of £10k. These payments were to be 'fast-tracked' as a demonstration of the HO's good faith. @pritipatel told Parliament they'd be rolled out beginning the week of 14 Dec. [4/35] https://t.co/KGjWvjuje6

A promise of "fast-tracked" anything from @ukhomeoffice is inherently suspicious, unless the thing in question is some form of abuse of migrants, refugees or PoC. Claimants - who have in many cases been waiting since mid-late 2019 to hear back - were guarded. [5/35]

January rolled around, and no one in our network of claimants had been contacted about their 10k. Several of these claimants had received one or multiple offers showing an Impact on Life assessment beyond Level 1, which triggers the Preliminary Award. [6/35]

The open letter was published, and a week or two afterwards, a couple of 10k offers trickled through, to claimants who had been fighting the Scheme for well over a year. Could it be…? [7/35]



No, of course it couldn't. As of today, only one claimant we know of has actually been paid the 10k Preliminary Award. Upon accepting it, the claimant asked when they would receive the funds and was told the bank transfer would take… 3 months. [8/35]

When he queried this surprising development in electronic banking, he was paid within weeks. This person knew to challenge @ukhomeoffice, with force, and was therefore given what he is owed, but not before he put up a fight. [9/35]

Others in our extended network were also told transfers would take months. When this was put to the current head of the Scheme, he apologised and blamed an internal mix-up.

We question the likelihood that any civil servant might think a bank transfer takes 3 months. [10/35]

The few Preliminary Awards offered have all been in cases where applications were made soon after the Scheme opened in April 2019, and the claims had already been fully assessed. (The HO expects 11.5k claims, but has recd only 1,761 to date.) [11/35]

Remember, the purpose of this 10k is not to stand in for full awards in cases where a derisory offer has been made and is being contested (in itself an open-ended process). It was supposed to be rolled out quickly and widely. [12/35]

That isn't what's happening. Preliminary Awards have been offered to a few claimants who have been fighting their full awards for a long time. The rest… are being told they don't qualify, because it isn't clear they qualify for an Impact on Life award. [13/35]

And wouldn't you know it, there's a template rejection letter. [14/35]



One of the individuals whose letter is pictured above claims both as a close relative and for the estate of a parent who was exiled and left to die alone in a care home in another country. @ukhomeoffice has substantial evidence that this, in fact, happened. [15/35]

This person fought @ukhomeoffice tooth and nail for years and was blocked at every turn. They exhausted their resources, and spent years desperately trying to bring their ailing parent home, incurring debt, ill health and emotional turmoil in the process. [16/35]

They were forced to cremate their parent overseas because burial in a foreign country would make no sense, and would be prohibitively costly anyway. Ten years later, they are still unable to bury those ashes in accordance with custom b/c they can't afford it. [17/35]

Again, all of this information is with @ukhomeoffice, which finds itself unable to say whether there has been an impact on the life of this individual OR their deceased parent because of an inability to demonstrate lawful status in the UK. [18/35]

To recap: @pritipatel makes a performance of announcing quick payments of preliminary sums to a vast, ageing cohort; the payments aren't quick by any means; and it seems they are only being made to claimants who are already appealing their full decisions. [19/35]

Applicants down the timeline, who are also ageing and rapidly running out of ways or the will to benefit from whatever measly award @ukhomeoffice throws at them, aren't seeing a penny. It isn't really a Preliminary Award - it's a Time-Biding Award. [20/35]

Claimants knew, from years of experience, that this would happen; that as ever, @ukhomeoffice would pretend to make meaningful change while sitting on its hands and waiting them out. That was why they signed the open letter. [21/35] https://t.co/6yG9BsEaor

That brings us back to the Pritster's response, which you can read in full here. Given the Home Sec's propensity to breathe meaningless sentence filler in reply to basic qs, we're going to take an axe to the blubber and only address substance. [22/35] https://t.co/f7Tc309b2T

At the bottom of par 2, she writes that the Scheme has "offered or paid out in excess of £3.7m". "Offered or" is doing about £1m worth of lifting there; the Jan stats show £2.87m *actually* paid. (Offers which aren't paid are being fought, because they are insulting.) [23/35]

Scroll to par 4, where she proudly proclaims the creation of a "new early preliminary payment… as soon as someone… can show any impact on their life." Head back up this thread to the person sitting with their dead parent's ashes on the dresser. [24/35]

Top of par 6, "these changes have been implemented at pace" - no, @pritipatel, you're getting confused. "Pace" is the thing at which you move to condemn refugees for insulting British taxpayers when a fire breaks out at the hovel in which you're illegally detaining them. [25/35]

At the top of p2, it isn't surprising or controversial that @ukhomeoffice would reject a call to take the Scheme away from it. But "decoupling" is a nonsense - just hand over the list of people given status under the Windrush Scheme to an independent body. [26/35]

The 2nd par under Loss of Access to Employment suggests the National Living Wage (i.e. minimum wage for over 25s) is the right metric for assessing lost access to employment. If this scandal had overwhelmingly affected white middle-class people, would that seem right? [27/35]

We have argued at length (not in the open letter) that where an actual award cannot be made, an ONS median should be the relevant metric for the general award. The reply seems to be "take the literal minimum and be grateful you're getting that." [28/35]

The par on pensions is classic @ukhomeoffice stuff - people identify a serious problem, tell them about it in detail and ask for it to be fixed, and the HO replies saying "there is a problem." It's an ex-gratia Scheme chaps; *you* can change the rules. [29/35]

On to page 3 and 3 pars on the review system which correctly repeat its flaws, i.e. a fundamental lack of independence. The Adjudicator is a puppet, and not a particularly competent one at that, judging by the review decisions we've seen. [30/35]

Excited to see 3 pars describing the “learning and development” that staff undergo - a direct reply to a simple question. Gold star, Prits! ■Do explain how this regimen has failed to educate staff that a bank transfer doesn’t take 3 months. [31/35]

That bank transfer debacle is at the thin end of the wedge - staff routinely send out letters with conflicting or mismatched claim numbers; are rude to callers asking reasonable questions; and don’t respond to claimants in a timeous manner. [32/35]

The pars on WCS data and Legal Aid convey no new information. We’re not asking you to explain the status quo - we’ve done that. We’re telling you what’s wrong and how to fix it. There’s no need to fill space for the sake of it - admit you won’t fix the problem. [33/35]

The same applies to the closing pars on the Windrush Community Fund. The Open Letter charged that the Fund is a PR exercise, and asked why it was only opened in December 2020. The reply is 4 pars of copy-pasted bilge explaining what the Fund is. [34/35]

That concludes today’s Lit Crit exercise.

This isn’t over, and we’re not done. The Windrush Compensation Scheme *must* be taken away from @ukhomeoffice if this govt has any intention of making amends for the lives it has ruined. #HOPayUp [35/35]