

15th April 2018

The Most Honourable Andrew Holness, ON, MP

Prime Minister

Office of the Prime Minister

1 Devon Road

Kingston 10

Dear Prime Minister:

I can only start by apologising for the reprehensible actions of the British Government in their treatment of members of the 'Windrush Generation', their descendants and their wider families. The degree of moral injustice and crass insensitivity that has been exposed is difficult to comprehend and I hope will not lead to lasting damage in the understanding between our countries. Sadly, I think this is far more than the "terrible mistake" admitted by the minister today and is rather a simple exposure of the natural mores and entrenched racism of the Conservative party.

I am in the happy position of representing Coldharbour ward in Brixton, Lambeth. At the centre of the town lies Windrush Square, dedicated to the people who have played such a key role in making our town, city and country great. This is a project I and others started working on almost 20 years ago and I'm immensely proud that it now provides permanent recognition for those who walked from Clapham Common to Brixton and its Labour Exchange, many of whom later made their homes and raised their families here. The award winning Black Cultural Archives sits to one side of the square, alongside a memorial to African and Caribbean Service Personnel, both the first of their kind in the UK. A few minutes' walk away lie the markets – another first, this time for their listing by Historic England on grounds of their immense cultural significance. I don't know if you have ever visited Brixton but I am certain that if you did you would be proud of the gloriously diverse cultural heritage it displays on every street corner.

In many ways Brixton is thriving, but there are also struggles for its residents and small businesses. The ward is amongst the poorest in the UK and the Borough of Lambeth has the greatest level of inequality of any in England and Wales across housing, health, education and unemployment. Day to day life can be immensely difficult for many of my residents and they often do not have the chances to which they are entitled. This recent debacle exemplifies the sort of incident which can tip things over the edge and I am worried for my constituents who are so often faced with tremendous challenges. We are seeking to show solidarity and support to the communities which have made Brixton, Lambeth and the UK their homes. We will be hosting a gathering for elders, families, neighbours, and communities to provide an unequivocal show of support and of togetherness and to make it clear that whatever the actions of government Brixton will always provide a welcome.

I understand that you are in London this week. It would be an immense privilege to welcome you to Brixton, of course. Alternatively I would be delighted to have the opportunity to discuss how it might be possible to better support our residents of Jamaican origin, along with the wider African and Caribbean communities, in the face of this display of prejudice and disdain.

I am, yours faithfully



Councillor Rachel Heywood

Coldharbour ward

London Borough of Lambeth