

## Making Complaints Count | Bishop Dr Desmond Jadoo MBE

In the latest episode of Making Complaints Count, our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor Annie Wakefield is joined by Bishop Dr. Desmond Jadoo MBE, Chair and director of the Windrush National Organisation. They discuss the Windrush Compensation scheme and:

- our report which spotlighted common reasons people were wrongly denied compensation
- his personal experiences with Windrush
- the steps the Government should take in righting some of these wrongs
- the role of advocacy organisations in supporting people seeking justice.

---

**Annie Wakefield** Hello and welcome to making complaints count our podcast where we explore the power of complaints and how organisations can use them to learn and improve. My name is Annie Wakefield.

I'm the equality, diversity and inclusion advisor and I'm your host for this episode.

Today we're joined by Bishop Dr. Desmond Jadoo MBE, Chair and director of the Windrush National Organization. Hi, Desmond.

**Bishop Dr. Desmond Jadoo MBE** Hi, good afternoon.

**Annie** Thanks for being with us.

Can you tell me a bit about your early life and background to start with?

**Desmond** Well, I'm born in the UK. My parents, both of them, were from Jamaica.

There's a little twist to my family because my grandfather was actually from India and he went to Jamaica in about 1890, and had 21 children. One of them was my actual father, and my mother was one of nine born in Jamaica.

My mother came to the UK in 1960 followed by my father in 1961. It was an interesting time because I used to hear them talk about their journey.

They were very open about their journey in all honesty, and I remember people saying, "Well, at least I didn't come here on a boat. I came on a plane," and I'm always wondering what were they going on about? What was the significance of that statement?

And then one day I asked. And they said, "Well, a load of Jamaicans," this is what they said to me. "A load of Jamaicans got on a ship at Kingston Harbor and decided to go to the UK in the late 1940s."

So hence a lot of people say I didn't come to England on a boat.

Then you start to realise and recognise the importance and significance of that journey, because that is the journey that led to my parents coming here and many other parents coming here to the UK and having come here on a five or ten year plan, make some money and go back home. Children popped up their heads and before you know it. You know, five years rather becomes 50 years and their lives ended up being here in the UK.

But the other side of it as well, in Jamaica where my parents are from their national anthem used to be God save the King and then God save the Queen and the Union flag used to fly over the King's House in Kingston.

And they all came here with British passports because I've seen them and coming here with British passport, I recognise that they were British.

Jamaica and many of the Caribbean Islands and other parts of the world were actual British colonies. And when people came here, they were actually British.

So they were British subjects, British citizens, call it what you may, but they came here with as much right as everyone else.

That's what my parents really taught me. "Listen, we are British as much as anyone else."

And one of the things they said as well was, "Be proud of who you are." Because sometimes when you started going to school, for example, you always felt the stranger. But then you saw other kids of my skin colour starting to come to school.

I think when we were younger growing up skin colour wasn't an issue, but the other side of it as well, which is very significant to Windrush, I found that I remember when we lived in an area called Sparkbrook in Birmingham, they were demolishing the

houses at the time. And I remember people saying we're going back to Ireland because a lot of my friends I found out were Irish.

So there was a great affiliation with the Irish Community and many people in the 1970s went back to Ireland and indeed many people in the early 1970s as well went back to Jamaica and some of them took their children that were born here as well.

So I mean, I've got a clear recollection of early life. Particularly of a child, a descendant of what we call today, the Windrush generation.

**Annie**

I think generation it's the right way to refer to it, isn't it?

Because it obviously includes many more people than just the people who came originally on the HMC Empire Windrush itself.

Indeed, my granddad as well is from Jamaica, St. Thomas Parish and he came in 1950.

So is very much also part of that Windrush generation, lasting right up until the mid to early 1970s.

Can you tell us anything about how that personal family history and your connection to Windrush has gone on to influence your work?

**Desmond**

Well, I'm from a family that is highly commercial in Jamaica.

So we always got on with what we had to do and a family that's very business orientated as well. And one of the things where they influenced me was through their resilience to the discrimination that they faced.

For example, my mother remembers when they moved from Bradford to Birmingham. She lived in Handsworth. One day someone patted her on her head.

A woman out the blue, a white lady, walked up to pat her on the head and said, "Oh, your hair is so lovely, just like a monkey."

I'm not going to say what my mother did about it, but she did do something about it. And I mean, knowing your granddad is Jamaican I'm sure you can imagine what happened as a result of that.

Afterwards they became very good friends, but it was the ability to stand up for what was right. That's the thing.

But that early education from them was absolutely crucial, in terms of Jamaica being a colony, their affiliation with the United Kingdom.

My grandfather, my mother's father, in 1939, trying to go and fight for Britain. But it wasn't just him, there were others as well that want to go.

He failed the medical, but others actually did come across the UK. They were in the RAF and they fought on the battlefields, in particular in World War Two. And then even when I asked them, "Why did you come to the UK?" they said, "Britain needed help. And we came to help them. We came to help build what we saw as the mother country."

I mean, even people like Enoch Power at that time were seen in a positive light, because he's one of the people that went to the West Indies to say, "Come and give us a hand."

But I think it's understanding their recollection of their journey and understanding why they came here and understanding as well their commitment and their commitment to family.

But in the case of my mother particularly, it was her commitment for justice and equality. That was the key element. My father was a bit more bullish because no one would really mess about with him in all honesty. But that's where the bullishness side come from with me as well. No nonsense.

Their stories, their recollections, understanding their family history as well. Because not many of us, not many of our parents, have shared their family history with their children.

But I'm one of those who never found myself in a strange land. I'm one of those who said, "I've a right to be here," and that's what they drummed into me. And they said you've got to stand up for what is yours.

No blacks, no Irish, no dogs.

I've always wondered why every house my parents have owned, they used to rent out rooms, you know, we lived in a house with three living rooms and one room was always rented out and I'm saying, "Why is a room rented out?"

But I understand now why one room was rented out because as soon as that person was able to get their own, then the room would be rented to someone else.

So you know, helping others you know, and being that all important one community as well, that was absolutely crucial.

And the other side of it as well, I developed an understanding. Sometimes my mother and father used to use some choice words to describe some people, who were white, who moved out. Not racist words, but I'm sure you can imagine what the words were.

And you know, like when they're moving, "Finally the so and so's gone," and I understand why now. Because these were the people that were putting up signs in the houses, "No blacks, no Irish, no dogs." But the joke was they bought that same house.

And that's the thing you see. That's the resilience, and they also have the ability to strategise and overcome the barriers that were put in front of them.

I remember the elders, as they were known to me, would come along to my parents' house.

They'd all lock themselves in the front room. Obviously, as you know, traditionally the best room in the house. And they said, come on, let's go make a plan. Today we have fancy words like strategies and strategy documents, but all they said was, "Come on, let's have a plan. Who's going to do what?" Then they execute the plan and they got what they wanted.

And that's the important thing. And that's what's really influenced the work that I do today.

**Annie**

I think I really see that coming through, that sense of resilience, the challenges that your parents and many people like your parents faced, I can see how that comes through in your work and how that sense of justice and kind of wanting to make up for where it's been anything but just the treatment that people have faced. I can see how that's come through in your work.

So you actually went on to then receive an MBE for your work for the Windrush generation, can you tell us a bit more about that and how you got involved in that work?

**Desmond**

I'll make it clear I didn't do it so I could get an MBE. Many people think that. The MBE actually was a surprise to me, in all honesty because I expect - because I'm hardcore. I am a Bishop, but I am very hardcore.

Some of my clergy colleagues sometimes get quite uncomfortable once I 'kick off', as it were. But they do see the need for that.

After all, Jesus did turn over the tables in the temple of the Pharisees, and sometimes you have to be prepared to do that.

I think it was back in 2011 when someone first approached me, who had been in the UK for an excess of 40 years. Case study number one in the Wendy Williams Review, a lady called Gloria. That's the lady I'm talking about.

She approached me 2011, 2012 and said I've lost my job. And they said I'm not British. She struggled to demonstrate her lawful status of being in this country. It's documented, so we're not sharing anything that isn't in the public domain.

And ultimately, various representations were made or was in various organisations at the time, and we were talking to MPs about this, but everyone was oblivious. Because we're saying, well, it can't work because she's very similar age to me, she came here in 1971, I was born here, but we're saying, well, what's the problem?

And once the Windrush scandal broke in 2018, after battling away for six years I encouraged her to go to Solihull in the West Midlands, the immigration office there. She went and believe it or not, and this was the greatest injustice, the documents that she showed me in 2000 and 12,13,14,15,16, 17, she went to Solihull and showed them the exact same documents that she had and all they looked at was the GP record to see that she was seen by a GP back in 1971. That validated when she arrived in the UK because she came as a child, she had to see the GP before she was allowed to go to school.

And guess what? Within an hour, she got a biometric residency permit. Four weeks later, we applied for her citizenship under the Windrush scheme, and she was granted British citizenship and today she's got a British passport, she's been through the compensation scheme.

That was the greatest injustice, because even the person that saw her in Solihull was baffled when he saw her file, saw the paperwork on her file, couldn't understand why they said she had no right to be here.

She was a grandmother, by the way. She lost a very, very good job as well. And that's the sense of injustice.

And then the other side of it that I saw were people that were frightened, the impact of the 'hostile environment'.

I had a friend I went to school with and I thought under the Windrush scheme. One day they're helping me at my church see people, then says, "Oh Desmond, you're going to have to do mine."

I said, "Do your what? You were born here?"

He says, "No, I came here on a boat from Jamaica in 1969 with the rest of the family, with my mom and dad."

And I said, "Did you?"

He said, "Yeah."

I said, "You ain't got a British passport?"

"No, it's never bothered me."

I said, "Well, did you never naturalise?"

He said, "Me. Why should I upset my life by exposing myself to the torture that they've been subjecting people to?"

And that's why today we still battle for a way to get people to come forward about their status. We're still having people come forward about their status.

Now I've had two or three in the last month, and people may say that's a low figure.

No, it's not when you're thinking in the grand scheme of things we're six years in and in the past month we still have three people coming forward. We've still got people stuck abroad as well who are now contacting us.

I've got a Jamaican chap at the moment who has been stuck in Poland since 1997 that we're trying to assist at the moment.

So the thing is, it's the difficulties that people face and their fears. That's a big challenge for us now in all the work we're doing as well as, to get people to overcome those fears.

**Annie**

It's really important work and as I can tell from what you've said, it's the impact you've had on those individual people helping them to essentially, as you say, things that they have a natural claim for suddenly having to prove.

They've built their entire life since being children here and now they're having to prove it.

But you've clearly been having an impact on that individual scale and then on a broader scale too.

In September this year we published our Spotlight report on the Windrush Compensation Scheme. In that report, we highlighted complaints that people had brought to us about some of those decisions the scheme had made on eligibility for compensation, and where the scheme's not always looked at all of the evidence provided.

Can you tell us a bit about your experience being a part of an advocacy group for people accessing the compensation scheme?

**Desmond**

OK, I'll need to make something clear here. There was some missing information that went around regarding the scheme.

That the scheme was a reparation scheme more than anything else, which is not accurate. That's not what it's there for.

The compensation scheme was there for people who suffered losses as a direct result of being unable to demonstrate their lawful status.

So that's a clear narrative. And one of the things I've always said to the Home Office is that you have to be clear on the narrative.

You've got to be unapologetic about what the narrative is, because then people clearly understand that that is not for me.

Then people do become confused with the eligibility criteria unfortunately because of some misinformation going around that it's a free for all, which it is actually not.

We've had people who haven't been through the Windrush scheme who have been compensated that demonstrated difficulties that they had prior to Windrush being launched, and that's fine.

And I've helped people to get their compensation in that route as well.

I think where the big issue is, is what I call conversion and throughput, meaning converting someone from status to compensation.

And that's because sometimes, unfortunately, when the Home Office gets it wrong, which they do just like I get it wrong at



times. I'm sure you and your nice job as well, you do get things wrong at times. None of us are perfect.

The problem is, at the end of the day, we keep saying to the Home Office we have to get a narrative out there. With the negative publicity rather what it does is it actually puts people off from applying.

And the thing is, there's no correlation. And we're in a process now of actually asking the Home Office for these figures. Next week we'll be asking them for them.

One of the things that we're looking into now is the conversion from status to compensation. Because no matter what, everyone who's had to go through status has had some form of discomfort, no matter what that discomfort is.

And that's an important aspect. The other side of it as well are children born in the UK after 1983. There's a status issue brewing there as well that needs to be addressed.

So in terms of eligibility, if you can see with what I've just said there, the scope is much wider.

For all the claims which I have dealt with, I've never had anyone turn down for eligibility. But it's probably the triage we do from our side which is very, very strict within the rules because the last thing we want to do is lead someone up the garden path. In all honesty and we'd rather not do that. Does it make you unpopular? Yes it does.

But that's the key element there.

But one of the big issues that we do have is the fact that the compensation scheme when it was launched.

The scope of the compensation scheme was very limited, and I think it just assumed that everyone was a factory worker and no one would have had a career and that in itself was a major barrier. I've got people that we claim compensation for who were care managers, school teachers, for example.

Not many people actually, that were factory workers. In all honesty, skilled individuals, academics, for example, they've been through the scheme. And one of the issues that we found in terms of scope, for example - and we've had some changes made to the scheme, my colleague Glenda Caesar. Close family payments, family members who were helping their parents, for example, or brother or sister, were able to claim whatever they lent to them back under the scheme, whether or not they got it back, that's a different story. But it's the

fact that they were able to claim for themselves, apart from just claiming impact on life.

One of the other issues that we had to deal with was loss of earnings, future loss of earnings and also as well if someone got a job, got alternative employment and they took a nosedive in salary for them to pay the difference between the salary that person was on prior to having that salary cut.

And we succeeded on that as well.

We've got issues surrounding children who have been in care, whether, local authorities fail to naturalise. We're still dealing with that now.

We've also been dealing with something called loss of career progression, meaning that would someone have had an opportunity to progress in their career, although speculative.

The other side of it is someone who's nearing the age of retirement to get back into their career. Would they be able to get back in? What's the level of retraining that's required, for example. So, if we look at a school teacher who's been out the system for five years and they're 62 years old, they're going to require three to four years of training to get back in. By the time that happens, they're 66 years old. So, what happens to that four years loss of earnings, for example?

And there are additional elements that we're looking at. There's a retirement pensions now, which the Home Office have agreed to top up as well.

Occupational pensions are still being looked into at the moment. So that's the scope of what we do. So we don't just complain as an organisation, we pick up and we challenge and we battle away the ones surrounding the loss of earnings. I mean that took 15 months to sort out, but we hammered away for 15 months. That's the difference with the Windrush National Organisation.

Because what we do is we pick up the issue and we will hammer away at that particular issue and will hammer away at it.

The other thing that we've discovered or we find difficult to understand sometimes is in terms of the appeal process. Obviously there is the Tier 1 review where it goes to a manager or supervisor.

However, the big issue that we have with that is when it goes to the Adjudicator. In our 12 point election plan ask for which

we've got concessions being incorporated in Home Office announcements, one of the things we've asked for was the ability to create a more accessible appeals process. Meaning that when we ask for Tier 1, do we want the Adjudicator to do it?

Should we then not have a scrutiny panel to look at it before it goes potentially to the Ombudsman? And I will tell you why: cultural understanding.

The first child in a black family, for example, and Windrush isn't just Black African Caribbean it's, you know, across the board, but let's focus on a Black family, a Black Caribbean family, the first person going to university is a big deal.

And someone who is stuck abroad not being able to get back into the UK because they were held out of the UK because they allegedly lost their leave to remain despite having right of abode. Many will say, well, that's no big deal.

It is a big deal.

It's understanding the importance of that achievement to a family and the impact that it would have had on the family at the time. Also, all the impact it would have had, because at that time there was no Zoom, there was no YouTube, there were no mobile phones, there was no WhatsApp.

But you know, it's disregarding something as simple as that - and I'm giving a very simplistic example here.

So in terms of the appeals process, who is in that appeals process that would understand and bring that cultural understanding, you know, in terms of a compensation claim. Although one appreciates that they are more robust with it, we believe that anyone who goes through the compensation, goes through status, would have suffered some impact and they should be compensated, even if it's at the lowest level. They should receive some compensation in any case, because they would have had even one sleepless night.

So it's developing that greater understanding culturally of the claimants. I will just speak to someone at the Home Office this week and I was talking about Rastafarians because I've got a Rastafarian gentleman and explaining why he would have detached himself from society in terms of having any interaction with authorities. Because the way in which society in the 70s and early 80s viewed Rastafarians, for example. And that did actually assist that caseworker in his thoughts, and he left that conversation with a clearer understanding of why

some people at the time would not come forward to naturalize, because they felt as though they were being oppressed by society in any case.

So you see, those are all the things that we have to look at sometimes when we're talking about barriers, when we're talking about eligibility, it becomes more complex than people think.

So initially the compensation claim was a simplistic scheme to say, "Right, Joe Smith works at a tyre factory, and he's been doing it for the last 30 years. He earns £500 a week and there's no pay increase, nothing fancy or calculated loss of earnings against that. He's had a bit of impact on life, will give him £10,000 on top."

But that's not exactly the case. Now that we're finding out about the issues the difficulty now is actually to bring about the change and the policy changes that are needed. So it's an ongoing piece of work all the time.

**Annie**

And I think you've made clear the not just obvious impacts that this has. It's not just loss of earnings, it's wide-ranging.

The university example you shared, it might seem simple, but it's not. It really is impacting a broad range of family life and that's one of the main reasons why we've tried to share those stories in our report.

The report was demonstrating some of those complex challenges that people have faced. We've called for changes to the compensation schemes eligibility criteria.

That's something that you mentioned being one of the barriers for people to receive the right compensation.

What other steps would you like to see the government take in that area?

**Desmond**

I go back to saying one thing. Reset the narrative.

Now at our Windrush International conference in October, for which your service was there, one of the things we talked about, from here on in, we set the narrative.

But you've got to reset what the Windrush scheme is, because I think somewhere along the way the whole scheme, and the narrative behind the scheme, respectfully has been lost.

And we need to reset that narrative.

But in addition to that I think there's a rule of thumb that it's going to be difficult to move the compensation scheme because if you move it, then every claim would have to be reopened that has actually been resolved, because if you're going to change the criteria of the scheme, then clearly you know you're going to have to revisit everything.

I do believe now what needs to be done is that there's greater oversight and scrutiny of the scheme, and that's why in our election, as we asked, we asked, for example, for a Windrush Commissioner, that would also probably look at race. The Government have announced a Windrush Commissioner.

We talked about an advocacy fund, which they've launched.

We've talked about [Recommendation 3](#) [to appoint a Commissioner for Windrush and Commonwealth Development] for example, which we as an organisation we're gearing ourselves up to assist with at the time with the consultants that the Home Office appointed. But one of the big issues is that Recommendation 3 will help develop that greater understanding of the trauma that people have faced because there is still a lack of understanding of the betrayal that people felt.

For example, I know one lady, her hair fell out. Her husband developed stage 4 cancer because of all the stress that he was facing, that the family were facing as well. The impact on the children. So clearly what government need to do, the Wendy Williams review, everything should be implemented in its entirety, but importantly as well, the reestablishment of the Windrush section within the Home Office is crucial as well.

But with the Commissioner, what we're saying as an organisation again is that you need to reestablish what used to be called the Stakeholders Advisory Group. But ensure that that's a funded group with a proper secretariat and then that can sit in a structure with the Windrush Commissioner, and the Windrush section in the Home Office that is there to drive through change.

This is the most important thing, Annie, that we've got to look at is changing the culture of the Home Office.

All of this will be in vain if we don't get that all important change.

One key thing we've asked for as well is the cessation of the 'hostile environment'.

Now we know that this all commenced from the 2007 Immigration and Borders Bill. So one of the things we've said in our document is anyone that was in the UK prior to 2007 there should be an amnesty.

Or just call a cessation to it and let those people come forward and regularise their stay. That will obliterate a lot of the issues because we've still got people today not coming forward and we need, the government need, to suspend the 'hostile environment' in order that people may come forward and get their status sorted out once and for all.

This isn't just now about the Windrush scandal. What we're trying to do is be proactive so we don't have another Windrush scandal in another 20 years' time.

And that's the important thing at the conference as well. We talked about e-visas, as I mentioned it. And you know the government have not withdrawn it.

What they've done is they've actually slowed down the conversion, but it's still happening. But they've slowed down the deadline for people to convert to e-visas because there are issues with that service. Everything's not perfect, just like anything else.

But importantly, they've recognised what's been said and I think that's the important thing because we don't want another Windrush scandal.

There should only ever be one Windrush scandal.

Although there is more than one because the scandal started on 22nd of June 1948, when Clement Attlee's government had a debate whether or not to send the ship to Ghana for the people on board to pick peanuts. But the point is, it's been scandalous the way the Windrush generation has been treated. It's scandalous today that, you know, to be British, and I asked this question, what is it to be British?

Still, your skin colour makes that all important difference.

So what the government need to do ultimately is to start that all important education. Make it compulsory so that our kids are educated about the origins of Britain, but importantly as well, Britain's colonial past. So they understand it and if anything positive is going to come out of this mess, that is something that's going to be positive.

Because up until this day, people ask me where am I from. When I say Birmingham, they look at me as though I'm a madman, you know. Well, you know, these are the additional issues, but are they relevant? Of course they are.

Because the Windrush scandal only came about because there were people at the Home Office who were thinking to be British, you have to be white.

And if you're black, you're not necessarily British. When people said they were black, they were basically accused of being liars.

**Annie**

And I think what you've demonstrated is that organisations such as the Windrush National Organisation and similar advocacy groups are a really important piece of this puzzle in terms of, yes, supporting people to access the compensation scheme, but also in driving forward that much needed cultural change. Helping people to understand the impacts that this has had.

But also some of the history, as you've mentioned, the history of Britain and how we ended up at this point and the kind of ongoing work needed around attitudes, culture in British society.

What role do you think that advocacy groups such as the Windrush National Organisation? What other role do they have in supporting victims? Have I summed it up accurately or are there other parts to that role they can play?

**Desmond**

In 2020, we wrote a strategy document and we talked about providing a hand-holding service from start to finish, and I'm glad to say that we still do that today.

Windrush National Organisation is not a funded organisation. Thankfully, we have some very nice sponsors who sponsor our international conference each year, but in terms of our day-to-day work as an organisation, we're not funded.

Sometimes we'll get some donations. We've had some kind benefactors over the years and thank you very much to them.

But however we do things like we do on national tours, the Home Office comes on there. We do have dialogue with the Home Office.

Sadly, there are some people in our community who say that we're in the pockets of the Home Office. No, we're actually

not. We hold them to account. The only thing is we're not hostile with it. Because when you're advocating for people, you're advocating for a better outcome. And if you shout at them, they're not going to listen.

If you reason with them, they will listen and as a result of being able to do that, what we've actually done is that we've obtained some successes in terms of changes in policy.

That's the important thing we've been able to get the Home Office to look at cases which they've dismissed, and they've looked back at them because what we've done, we've reviewed the evidence. And in reviewing the evidence, we've actually pointed out A,B,C has been missed.

And by doing that and by demonstrating that you build then what we call a positive working relationship and that's the other side of advocacy in terms of the actual claimant or victim. One of the things we do is that we don't just look at filling in a form for them and talking to Home Office. We look at the health and well-being. Where can we signpost them to?

I said this to someone yesterday. They'll come to us saying my bins not being emptied. It's not trivial. You've got to understand, to them it's a big deal. Every week, more bins emptied late. You know, because of where they are in life, where they are in life, they feel that everyone's against them.

Supporting people as well financially. Sometimes you're going to see someone and their electricity's on emergency, although we have no money, when we leave they've got electricity on their meter, for example.

We help people get flights. We help people get furniture. Yes, the Vulnerable Person's team is there they go to them as well.

We'll negotiate with them, but sometimes as an organisation, we're blessed to have links into other housing bodies where we may be able to get someone someplace to live a lot quicker than them going through the local authority schemes as well.

I think one of the things we're advocating for as well is for those schemes to be more joined up because many people say, well, the Home Office haven't found me a flat. Well, the Home Office don't provide flats. It's a local authority, so we've said to the Home Office, please tell people that you can support their application, but you do not allocate them a flat. That is important communication.



How do you communicate? And are you making yourself crystal clear of what you can and can't do?

And that's where advocacy comes in. And sadly, sometimes we find ourselves now delivering bad news to people, which isn't our role. But I say to colleagues what we have to do is we just have to be truthful. So if we're delivering the truth, let's just deliver the truth. It doesn't matter.

Sometimes it's not what people want to hear. But hey, what are we supposed to do? I think sometimes the difficulty with advocacy is this. Being an advocate, you're actually no one's friend. Because you've got to be able to put your personal feelings to one side and you've got to be able to put yourself in that person's shoes but advocate for them respectfully.

But then you've got to listen to what the other side has got to say and then deliver that back and analyse that information. But importantly as well, you've got to keep both lines of communications open. That's why you've got to put your personal feelings to one side and actually just do that job. So you're that conduit.

If you imagine you're a pipe and the pipe gets chopped in the middle. Water is going to spill out both sides before you know it, there's no water travelling from one end to the next.

It's a simplistic example, but that's what an advocate is, is to keep that pipeline open to ensure that we achieve the best outcome we possibly can for those that we are seeking to represent. But also as well for future claimants, ensuring that they get a better bite of the cherry if you get what I'm driving at, in terms of ensuring that the scheme is more receptive and takes into account their own individual personal circumstances.

**Annie**

It's very clear that advocacy groups are really helpful for people who have been affected by the Windrush scandal and you're very helpful at helping people to understand what their rights are and the ways they can seek justice for what's gone wrong.

We know that there are many more people who've been affected by this and they're struggling to get the fair compensation they deserve, than just those who've brought complaints to us so far.

What recommendations would you make to someone who might have a complaint about their experiences with the Windrush compensation scheme?

Desmond

One of the things we do, because I do a bulk of my work, is to review compensation decisions.

People come to me specifically with those, and there have been some cases where I've said, "Put those to one side," because what I try to do is look at the initial forms, if they are available. It's not all the time they're available.

We look at the narrative under which compensation was claimed in the first place.

That's the first thing we look at, and if the narrative is wrong, then we say scrub that. Of course, they're perfectly entitled to put in a different claim, and we just say that the previous claim wasn't articulated correctly, so we can do that.

The other side of it is then we look at, if it's a Tier 1, has the information been analysed correctly? Has information been missed out? Because we can introduce new evidence if necessary, and we're able to do that even on a Tier 2, but the Tier 2 then goes back to being Tier 1 in any case before it's sent to the Adjudicator. However, Tier 3, accessibility to the Ombudsman service.

There are barriers to that because people have to go to their MP. Some people, sadly, if some of you imagine someone who's - I hate to use the phrase - but you know, we know that we've got a lot of people who are classless, disaffected communities, people who don't vote, who aren't interested in their politicians, etc.

As well, not every MP is accessible. And they have to go to their MPs to get access to the Ombudsman service.

One of the changes that I would like to see is organisations such as the Windrush National Organisation to be commissioned to run that triage service, to refer cases to the Ombudsman. Because we've got the experience of understanding what the compensation scheme is for, understanding the criteria, understanding the culture and then making a judgement and an informed decision with the individual that the case is to go to the Ombudsman.

I think one of the changes that we need to see is a change in how cases are referred to the Ombudsman. Because I think a

lot more cases would go to the Ombudsman, but sadly in some cases - I do say some, not all - the question is, is flowing it through a Member of Parliament the best way with Windrush cases? That's the thing.

**Annie**

And you've picked up on something that organisationally we know is one of the biggest barriers with cases such as this. And it is something that we have asked the government to change.

And I think also from what you've said you it's clear that the Windrush National Organisation can help to break down some of those barriers.

But there's clearly still more to do.

That's us. Thanks for joining us today, Desmond. And for sharing your valuable insights and experiences with us.

That's all we have time for today but stay tuned for future episodes of Making Complaints Count.