



MP Ellie Reeves

This month we marked the 75th anniversary of HMT Empire Windrush bringing passengers from the Caribbean to the UK. This was a seminal moment in our history creating a new generation of Black Britons, the seeds of what is now known as the Windrush Generation.

Members of this generation heeded the call to come to the UK and help rebuild our country after the war. From the NHS, to education, to business they helped build our national infrastructure we rely on today. They gave so much and yet asked for so little in return.

We owe so much to them, and I was so proud to bring our Shadow Foreign Secretary, David Lammy to attend the Pineapple Club at Anerley Town Hall to mark the occasion. The Pineapple club is a fantastic organisation that serves retirees from the Afro-Caribbean community.

For 30 years now members come together from all over South East London each week to Anerley Town Hall for an incredible community lunch along with music, activities, and dominoes! Along with David it was an honour to meet so many first generation Windrush citizens and their descendants.

Joining them for lunch we heard so many incredible stories and their lived experiences showcased how far we have come as a society over these last 75 years. I was so proud to join them to celebrate the anniversary and so proud that we have such fantastic resource like this in our area.

But the bitter side to all of this is the continuing injustice so many from the Windrush generation face. Not only did they face incredible difficulties settling in the UK, but years later many were cut off from accessing the very basics – work, housing and healthcare - by the Government's hostile environment policy.

This is a scandal that continues to cast a shadow over our country's reputation for fairness. And still today, delayed compensation for all those denied the citizenship that was rightfully theirs continues to add insult to injury.

It was incredibly powerful to hear David speak about this and how a Labour government would end the blockages and delays and deliver the compensation that many from the Windrush generation are entitled to. They built our hospitals, powered our industry and transformed our culture, they should be celebrated not punished.

Despite this bitter undertone to the visit, I was so proud to mark the anniversary at the club. The energy in the room, sense of community and joy of people coming together was beautiful and shows our South East London community at our best. I look forward to visiting the group again.

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