

# Then

Black Caribbean immigrants experienced racism on many different levels and there were no laws to protect them.



## **Qualification and work - Men**

Almost half of all the men who came from the Caribbean to the UK throughout the 1950s had previously worked in skilled positions or possessed excellent employment credentials.

Over half the men from the Caribbean initially accepted jobs with a lower status than their skills and experience qualified them for.

Many found their access to work restricted to jobs the local population considered undesirable, including street cleaning and general labouring, or to jobs that demanded anti-social hours such as working night shifts

## **What about women from the Caribbean?**

Most women undergoing nurse training were placed on the 2-year SEN course, rather than on the more prestigious SRN course.

Women who were qualified nurses were often restricted to undertaking some of the most menial tasks during training. They could not easily return to the Caribbean after training, because the SEN qualification was not recognised there.

# Now

Britain today has laws against racism, but in practice Black British people are still experiencing it.

According to the Parliament website: "The Windrush scandal demonstrates a combination of a lack of concern about the real-world impact of the Home Office's immigration policies compounded by a systemic failure to keep accurate records, meaning many people who are British citizens or have leave to remain in the UK do not have the paperwork to prove it."

Because of the Windrush scandal, some people have lost their jobs, their homes, and their right to access bank accounts, healthcare and public funds. Others have been forced to return to the Caribbean. In 2013 the Government removed legal aid for almost all immigration cases, which made it much more difficult for people who could not afford the cost of appeal.

The Home Office failed to keep proper records of what status had been accorded to those coming from the Caribbean. In 2010 the Home Office destroyed the landing cards of those people who arrived from the Caribbean in the 1950s and 1960s, so it is now impossible to check the arrival dates for many older people. A person's arrival date is crucial to a citizenship application, because the 1971 Immigration Act gave people who had already moved to Britain indefinite leave to remain.

Celebrating Windrush in Devon is a project of Devon Development Education, 17 St David's Hill, Exeter, EX4 3RG.  
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# WIND RUSH



**WINDRUSH** is used to describe the post-war immigration of West Indian people to the UK between 1948 and 1971 from Caribbean countries such as Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Many of the people who came over to England from the Caribbean during this period came at the invitation of the British Government, as British citizens from British-owned colonies, to help rebuild war-damaged Britain after WWII. They paid their own fares.



## ***Why is it called Windrush?***

One of the first ships to arrive in Britain, in June 1948, was called the Empire Windrush. The shipping company found it was going to have a thousand empty spaces on this voyage, so it advertised in the local Caribbean papers, offering passage to the UK at £28 per person. Over half of the passengers were from Jamaica.

The **1948 British Nationality Act** gave all citizens in British Colonies the right to be a British citizen. Many people from British colonies had fought alongside the Allied forces during World War II. Those that came to Britain came to rebuild a broken post-war country which they saw as their 'Mother Country'. Britain encouraged immigration.

## Need for workers

The demand for both skilled and unskilled labour continued to grow in the 1950s as the British economy started to recover. Employers and managers began to recruit systematically in the Caribbean:

### **London Transport**

recruited more than 3,500 Barbadians in the ten years from 1956, paying their fares to the UK, but then recovering them through a deduction from wages. It also recruited in Jamaica.

**British Rail** also advertised in Barbados.

**British Hotels and Restaurant Association** recruited in Barbados.



### **National Health Service**

By 1955, 16 British colonies had set up selection and recruitment agencies to ensure a good supply of candidates to train as nurses in Britain. The NHS could not meet the health needs of the population without recruiting outside the UK. Even today, Britain continues to recruit overseas for NHS workers.