

Windrush Day 2023

The health and social experience of the Windrush generation

Thursday 22 June 2023, was the **75th Anniversary** of the Empire Windrush's arrival in Britain. After a successful campaign (led by Patrick Vernon) Windrush Day was introduced in June 2018.

In 1948 citizens of the British colonies were given the right to settle in the UK. After the war, Britain had a much depleted workforce and needed help to rebuild what had been lost. The British government called on its citizens in the Caribbean to come and help. Between 1948 and 1970 nearly half a million people immigrated to from the Caribbean to Britain. The people from the Caribbean who chose to come to work and live in the UK were subsequently known as the Windrush generation.

The Windrush generation refers to the migrants who arrived from the Caribbean between 1948 and 1971. It is named after the Empire Windrush which arrived on the 22nd of June 1948, carrying the first 492 of the generation. This refers to more than 300,000 men, women and children. A descendant of this generation is someone born in the UK to a parent, grand- parent or great grand parent who is or was part of the generation.

Related health and social care concerns and inequalities

More recently, the term has become synonymous with a public scandal in 2017, after it emerged that hundreds of British citizens—overwhelmingly the children of the Windrush generation had been wrongly detained, deported and denied legal rights, healthcare and benefits through the hostile policy environment (Hewitt, 2020; McKee, 2018; Wardle & Obermuller, 2019). Some people lost their homes. The documentation proving their status was destroyed by the same government that invited them here in the first place.

Barriers to health and social care

This scandal not only highlighted the mistreatment of the children of the Windrush by the government, but the barriers that their parents faced over years of immobilization, separation and exclusion (Wardle & Obermuller, 2019).

Despite their diverse origins and backgrounds, many children of immigrants are at great risk of experiencing social inequality (Drouhot & Nee, 2019; Heath et al., 2008; Portes et al., 2009; Zhou & Gonzales, 2019).

NHS England » Still on the journey: Windrush 2020

The impact of COVID-19 on the black and minority ethnic (BME) NHS staff and communities has been significant. Alongside the powerful Black Lives Matter movement, a unique importance has been placed on this year's Windrush anniversary.

Windrush Day recognises and honours the contribution of the Windrush Generation and their descendants and to "keep their legacy alive for future generations, ensuring that we all celebrate the diversity of Britain's history".

We know that seven decades following the arrival of the Windrush, BME staff in the NHS are still more likely to be under-represented at senior levels in the NHS workforce and often have poorer experiences of the workplace environment.

The Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) shows that NHS organisations are beginning to make some progress in these areas, and of course, there is still much more work to do.

Windrush what is it?

People from the Windrush generation and their descendants are reported in research and NHS guidance to face extra and different challenges compared to the wider community and other minorities.



One such issue is **High Blood Pressure**, also known as Hypertension- it is not known why rates are higher within the community, but it has been theorised as a combination of diet, lifestyle and genetic factors relating to the storing of fat within the body.

- <https://www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/our-research/research-successes/ethnicity-and-heart-disease>
- <https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/heart-matters-magazine/medical/african-caribbean-background-and-heart-health>
- <https://www.bloodpressureuk.org/your-blood-pressure/how-to-lower-your-blood-pressure/healthy-eating/your-ethnic-background-and-your-blood-pressure/>
- <https://blackmenshealth.org.uk/your-health/hypertension/>
- <https://www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/topic/default?id=high-blood-pressure-and-african-americans-1-2998>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4108512/>
- <https://www.webmd.com/hypertension-high-blood-pressure/guide/hypertension-in-african-americans>
- <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/why-high-blood-pressure-is-a-silent-killer/high-blood-pressure-and-african-americans>
- <https://www.nice.org.uk/sharedlearning/community-based-approaches-to-addressing-high-blood-pressure-with-black-african-and-caribbean-men>

Another issue is diabetes. According to reports the rate of **type 2 diabetes** maybe be double in the Windrush and descendent's of Windrush community than the wider community as a whole. The rate has a gender disparity with women in the community even more likely that women in wider community as men in the wider community are. The reasons are not fully understood but differing BMI, blood pressures, poverty and behavioural reasons are all reported as possible causes.

- <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/diabetes-the-basics/types-of-diabetes/type-2/diabetes-ethnicity>
- https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about_us/news/type-2-diabetes-develop-differently-ethnicity
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6948201/>
- <https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/improving-type-2-diabetes-outcomes-for-black-communities.html>
- <https://www.england.nhs.uk/midlands/2021/01/13/new-nhs-drive-to-urge-black-asian-and-ethnic-minority-northamptonshire-people-to-prevent-or-delay-type-2-diabetes/>
- <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/factors-contributing-higher-incidence-diabetes-black-americans>



For Men within the community there is a higher risk of **prostate cancer**. This risk is said to be double from 1 in 8 for the wider community to 1 in 4 for the Windrush community. Prostate Cancer UK strongly recommends men from the community over the age of 45 to have a PSA test can help diagnose cancer before symptoms emerge. There is more information on their website and on the NHS website.

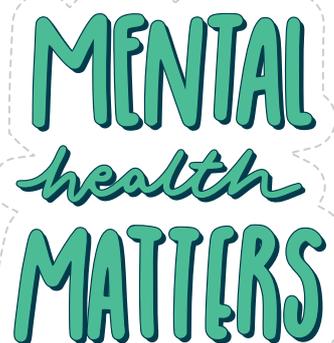
If you are over 50 you can insist on a PSA test even if your GP refuses. As needed, they recommend making a formal complaint.

- <https://prostatecanceruk.org/prostate-information-and-support/risk-and-symptoms/black-men-and-prostate-cancer#:~:text=1%20in%204%20Black%20men,might%20be%20linked%20to%20genes.>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/prostate-cancer/>
- <https://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/news/dedicated-group-champions-black-men-prostate-cancer>
- <https://prostatematters.co.uk/the-risks/an-introduction-to-prostate-cancer-for-black-men/higher-risk-of-prostate-cancer-in-men-of-african-heritage/>
- <https://prostatecanceruk.org/about-us/news-and-views/2020/10/help-us-understand-why-black-men-are-higher-risk>
- <https://prostatecanceruk.org/about-us/news-and-views/2023/01/black-men-over-45-speak-to-their-gp-about-a-psa-blood-test>
- <https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/time-to-talk-about-the-prostate-cancer-risk-in-black-men-and-what-we-can-do-about-it/>
- <https://www.genescare.com/uk/news/research-finds-black-men-are-unaware-of-their-greater-risk-of-prostate-cancer>



Another health issue is an **increased rate of mental health issues** within the Windrush community and their descendants. It is not known why but Poverty, Poor Housing and Racism have been linked to the higher rate of diagnosis of mental health issues within people in or descended from the Windrush generation.

- <https://mentalhealth-uk.org/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-bame-mental-health/>
- <https://ilpa.org.uk/members-area/working-groups/well-being-new/well-being-resource-hub/mental-health-resources-for-black-people-and-poc/>
- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-bame-communities>
- [https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/our-strategy/becoming-a-truly-anti-racist-organisation/facts-and-figures-about-racism-and-mental-health/#:~:text=Finding&text=Despite%20higher%20prevalence%2C%20B lack%20adults,in%20the%20White%20British%20group\).&text=Evidence% 20suggests%20that%20people%20from,mental%20health%20problem%2 0in%20adulthood.](https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/our-strategy/becoming-a-truly-anti-racist-organisation/facts-and-figures-about-racism-and-mental-health/#:~:text=Finding&text=Despite%20higher%20prevalence%2C%20B lack%20adults,in%20the%20White%20British%20group).&text=Evidence% 20suggests%20that%20people%20from,mental%20health%20problem%2 0in%20adulthood.)
- <https://i-d.vice.com/en/article/qj4b37/6-black-british-mental-health-charities-support-donate-volunteer>
- <https://www.blackmindsmatteruk.com>
- <http://borderlinesupport.org.uk/bpd-support/bame/>
- <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/black-lives-matter-protests-mental-health-organisations-support-donate-a9575611.html>
- <https://mentalhealth-uk.org/black-asian-or-minority-ethnic-bame-mental-health-support-services/>

The logo features the words "MENTAL", "health", and "MATTERS" in a stylized, rounded font. "MENTAL" and "MATTERS" are in a light green color, while "health" is in a darker green. The text is set against a white background with a dashed green border.

Another health issue is **Sickle Cell Disease**. This is a genetic disease which reduces the blood's ability to carry oxygen. It is much more common in people of Afro-Caribbean origin than any other background. Symptoms begin to emerge during childhood and include Serious Sickle cell crises, increased risk of serious infections and anaemia. If both parents are carriers of the gene there is a 1 in 4 chance they will have the disease. Many more people are carriers than have the disease. It requires lifelong treatment, and it can reduce life expectancy.

- <https://www.medway.nhs.uk/services/haematology.htm>
- <https://www.cuh.nhs.uk/patient-information/sickle-cell-disease/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sickle-cell-disease/causes/>
- <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/blood-and-lymph/sickle-cell-disease>
- https://www.letstalksicklecell.co.uk/?gclid=CjwKCAjwhdWkBhBZEiwAlibLmLEKhs_Xg_RHfVJIC4vsUxx3t6tee233sDpVAIV5S4D_dN7yyO0X7xoC3HgQAvD_BwE
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sickle-cell-disease/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-58665308>
- <https://www.medway.nhs.uk/services/haematology.htm>
- <https://www.sicklecellsociety.org>



Overall, the amount of **Kent and Medway specific support** for the Windrush generation and their descendants is limited. There is support however and links are included below.

- <https://www.kentlive.news/all-about/black-communities>
- <https://www.chathamdockyardresearchers.co.uk/black-people-in-kent>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/oct/21/absolute-hell-kent-residents-speak-out-over-hate-surge>
- <https://macacharity.org.uk/whats-new/>
- <https://thedockyard.co.uk/news/celebrating-medways-black-heroes/>
- <https://www.kentlive.news/news/how-medway-recognises-contribution-made-6919615>
- https://www.kpho.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/43579/Ethnicity-in-Kent-and-Medway-2011.pdf
- <https://www.kentecc.org.uk/a-black-history-month-2021-to-remember/>

There is more information and support related to **issues faced in London and nationwide** and again links are available below.

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Overall, there are many challenges in the community and hopefully this resource will have been of benefit.

