

## First impressions

### Benjamin Zephaniah, writer and poet

"I think it was 1956, 1957. My mother was a typical Jamaican girl walking down the street. She saw a poster on the wall that said 'Come to England! The streets are paved with gold, the streets flow with milk and honey, blah, blah, blah. You can start a new life here.' She was with her sister at the time. Her sister said, "I'm not going there - it's too cold!" And my mum went, "I'm going to give it a chance."

### Sister Ina Spence, nurse and midwife

"So I came to England in 1963 September. I came on the plane to England and on the train from London to Manchester. When I came to Manchester, I was met at the train station by my partner. Came home to the house that we were living in, which was on Great Western Street. By the next day, I was out to buy a coat. He bought me a cardigan before I came and I put the cardigan on. Stretford Road was a busy place at the time. They bought me a coat and two pairs of boots, a dressing one and one to wear as an ordinary one. And we get tights and things. I'd never wear a coat or even a cardigan, or winter boots. I didn't know what winter boots was until I come here."

"On my way coming up on the train from London, I could notice all these long rows of houses with chimneys on top. I thought that they were factories. It's only later I found out no, they're not - they're terraced houses. The place was so cold, so damp and by the time it was October, it was very foggy. In December, you could hardly see anyone before you because it was so foggy. Obviously, it was coal fires they were using in the houses. There was no central heating, not many people's got gas fires or anything. I find it very, very difficult. At the time, I think Jamaica was a better place to live because obviously, in Jamaica we had outside toilet, yes, and the kitchen was outside. I didn't expect to come here and see the outside toilet and the kitchen outside! I must say, one thing I liked the difference here, when I came, because there was a fridge. In Jamaica, we had no fridge, no running water, no electricity. That's the only difference that I see here, that there was a fridge in the house. Nothing else, really."

### Prison Radio Association