Rt Hon Keith Vaz MA (Cantab) PC



Keith Vaz made history in 1987 when he was elected as the first person of Asian origin to sit in the British Parliament for 55 years and only the 4th in history. The son of immigrants to the UK who came from Goa, India he is considered one of the most influential individuals on diversity and inclusion issues in the UK.

Longest serving Asian Member of Parliament in UK History

He is the longest serving Asian origine MP in British history having served in Parliament **32 years** from 1987-2019 when he retired from the House of Commons. His sister Rt Hon Valerie Vaz MP has been the MP for Walsall in the West Midlands since 2010. His late mother, Merlyn a teacher, was the first Ethnic Minority Councillor ever on Leicester City Council.

Education and Early life

He was born in Aden, Yemen. He came to Britain aged 9. Educated at Latymer Upper School, Hammersmith and at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge University where he studied Law. He and went on to qualify as a Lawyer working in the public sector in Local Government and then at a Community Law Centre (1981-1987).

Member of Parliament for Leicester East (1987-2019)

He stood for Parliament in 1983 aged 25 in Richmond and was elected MP for Leicester East in the Midlands at the age of 30 making him then the youngest Labour MP of the Parliament. He was elected 8 times as the local MP.

In Parliament, he took up numerous local, national and international causes including the campaign for Justice for the victims of BCCI. His Private Members Race Relations Bill won Government support and became law.

Minister for Justice - Lord Chancellor's Department (1999)

Tony Blair appointed him Minister for Justice in his first administration, and he oversaw the Crown Prosecution Service and the new Community Legal Service. Prior to that he was the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Attorney General and Secretary General.

Minister for Europe - Foreign & Commonwealth Office (1999-2001)

He was then appointed Minister for Europe at the Foreign Office by Mr Blair with the responsibility for EU enlargement bringing in the 8 EU countries that applied to join. He made 54 visits to EU countries during his term of office. He was also responsible for the Entry Clearance Operation establishing satellite visa centres in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Chairman of the Home Affairs Committee (2007-2016)

He is the longest serving Chairman of the Home Affairs Committee in Parliamentary history. The Committee is considered one of the most influential at Westminster and oversees the work of the Home Office one of Britain's most important government departments. He has held inquiries into immigration; policing; counter terrorism and European cooperation. His committee produced reports into the phone hacking by the UK press.

32	8	70,457	292	9
Years as a Member of Parliament	General Election Victories	People tested for Diabetes at the Charity he founded	Editions of Talking Points, he has presented	Years as the Chairman of Home Affairs Select Committee

Chairman of the Integration Foundation

He is the Founder Chairman of the think tank **The Integration Foundation** one of whose Patrons is the US Civil Rights Icon **the Rev Jesse Jackson**. The IF provides citizens and in particular diaspora communities, with access to decision-makers and enables individuals, organisations, and communities to understand issues of process and governance. It has taken up hundreds of cases and issues each year.

Awards and Honours

He was named "Asian of The Year" by the Asian "*WHO'S WHO*" in 1988. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Law from De Montford University, Leicester. He was also named as MP of the Year by a number of organisations. He received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the AAA for his Outstanding Contribution to Politics. In 2007 he was appointed a Member of the Privy Council by HM Queen Elizabeth II.

Books

He is the Editor of *"City 2020"* and three editions of *"Rainbow Over Westminster"* a compendium of BAME MPs and Peers.

Radio Presenter - Lyca Radio

He has a weekly radio programme *"Talking Points"* on Lyca Radio where his guests have included Prime Ministers and Bollywood stars. He has presented 292 editions of the current affairs programme.

Founder of Silver Star Diabetes

He is the Founder of Silver Star Diabetes a Leicester based charity which promotes diabetes awareness. Through its Mobile Diabetes Units, the charity attends major community events and runs a weekly Diabetes Chai Chat with international experts. So far 70,457 and its MDU's people has been tested. The charity has held Camps in Bangladesh, Tunisia, Morrocco, Yemen, Goa and Kolkata.

Family

He has been married to the Lawyer & Tribunal Judge Maria Fernandes, and they have a son Luke and daughter Anjali both who studied at Cambridge University and who are both lawyers.











