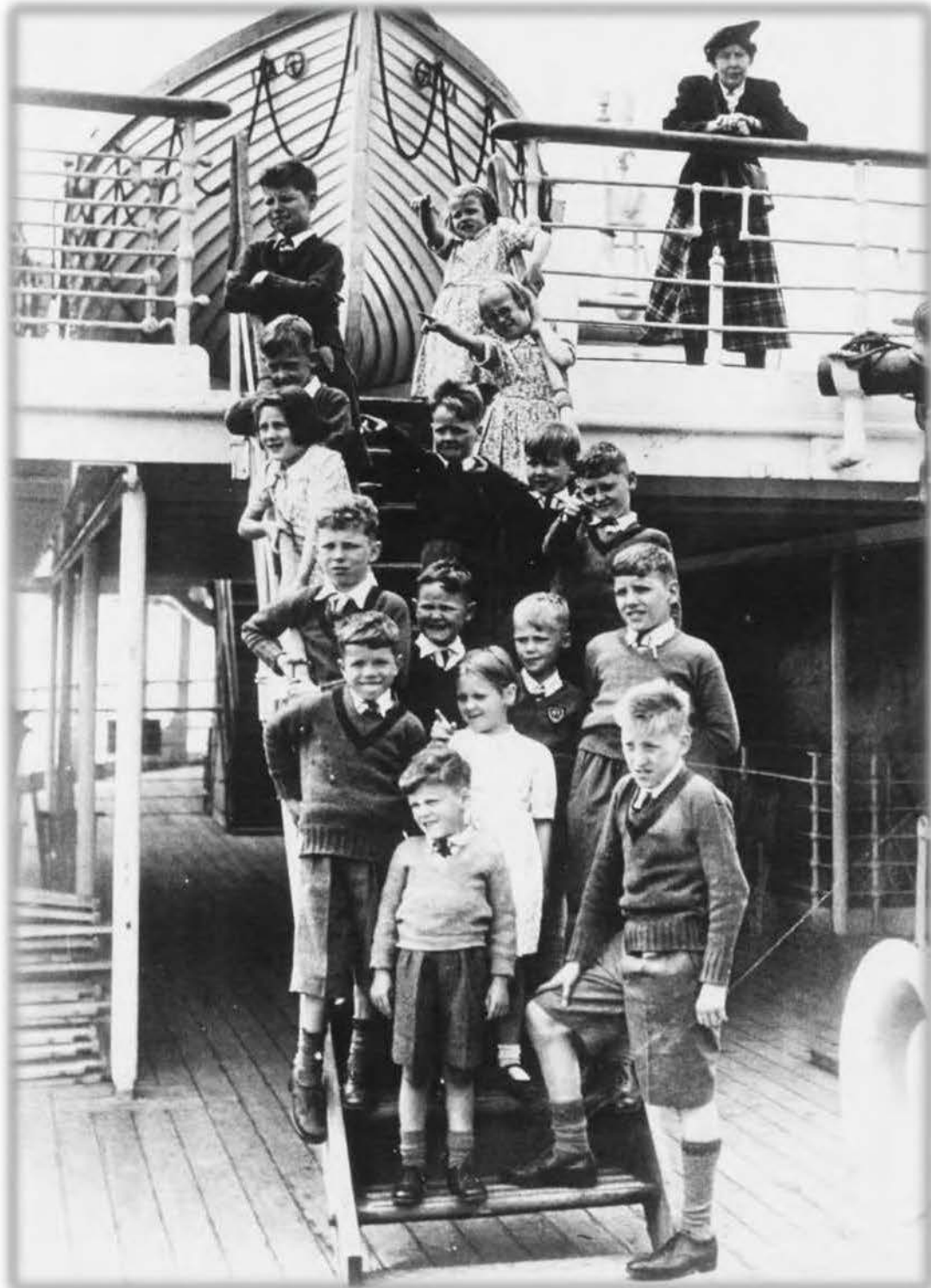


CHILD MIGRANTS TRUST

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry October 2019



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has used historical records and the Trust's own files as source material. We have sought external evidence to support various aspects of the report, for example, the early warnings to government regarding the risk to the children's safety and well-being.
- 1.2 In the mid-1980s, while employed as a qualified child protection social worker for Nottinghamshire County Council Social Services, I founded a pioneering post-adoption support group called Triangle. This brought me into contact with an adopted woman who had recently discovered that her brother had been sent to Australia as a young child.
- 1.3 In 1986, a lady in Australia wrote to tell me that she had been in care in Nottingham and shipped to Australia as a four-year-old with other children. She had been told that her parents were dead and asked me to help find her family - yet her mother was very much alive and living in the East Midlands.
- 1.4 After consulting with the British Association of Social Workers, I approached a journalist from The Observer. We placed an advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald and the first enquiries started to arrive in Nottingham. The subsequent investigation and visit to Australia lifted the lid on the painful realities of the British Child Migration schemes. These issues were fully explored and exposed by two consecutive full-page articles in The Observer newspaper in July, 1987.



- 1.5 Founded in 1987, the Child Migrants Trust (CMT) is the only specialist, independent social work agency providing professional services for this unique and special group of people. CMT has since developed considerable knowledge, skill and expertise in the areas of identity, separation, loss, childhood abuse and the impact of these across the lifespan.
- 1.6 I lead a professional, qualified team of dedicated, committed specialist social workers who are both Australian and British. Details about the work of the CMT are included later in this statement.
- 1.7 Britain's post-war Child Migration policy spanned the Commonwealth, reaching Canada, Australia, Zimbabwe and New Zealand. CMT has visited and worked in all of these locations.
- 1.8 I have met and worked with many hundreds of Former Child Migrants. Those from Scotland are noticeable by their strong sense of connection to Home and country, but also a crushing lack of personal and family identity. It is almost as if they compensated for the lack of belonging to a family by their national identity as a Scot writ large. Expressed through music, dress, language and strongly preserved accents, Scottish child migrants impacted significantly on my work from the earliest days of CMT.
- 1.9 It is matter of public record that many former child Migrants were subject to extremely damaging emotional, physical and sexual abuse. These were the most exquisitely vulnerable of our young children both in the United Kingdom and Australia. Audrey Wise M.P., a Member of the Health Select Committee in 1998 visited Australia to hear evidence from former Child Migrants, some from Scotland. "*War Crimes without a war*" was her view. During the 2014 Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse public hearings in Western Australia, "*Crimes against humanity*" was the description given to the suffering of hundreds of children in the care of a particular religious Order.
- 1.10 I have been assisted in the preparation of this report by two Assistant Directors. Ian Thwaites has worked intensively for more than twenty years with former Child Migrants, including many from Scotland who were sent to Australia and Canada. Mervyn Humphreys has played a key part in all the Trust's written submissions. Other members of CMT have also made vital contributions in researching and presenting this report.
- 1.11 This report has not focused in detail on the physical, sexual and emotional abuse endured by former Child Migrants in institutions prior to their migration from Scotland. Rather, this account concentrates on the consequences of child migration for the individual children and families involved.
- 1.12 The Scottish Inquiry team has travelled to Australia and the USA to take the testimony of those who suffered such horrific abuse in Scotland, Canada and Australia. It is their voice - silenced for so long - which captures and conveys the awful reality of their ordeal and its long-term impact.
- 1.13 Former child migrants live with the legacy of childhood deportation, institutional abuse, loss of family and alienation: *'I've been looking over my shoulder all my life. No home, no family, I don't need anyone to tell me I'm nobody, it's in my face every day. And that's how I've always been treated.'* (Scottish child migrant, █████ 82 years)

1.14 At the 2010 national apology to former Child Migrants and their families, Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, said *“This cruel, unnatural practice was not so much transportation as deportation - deportation from your Mother Country. And as Nations we need to know this uncomfortable fact.”*

1.15 Former Child Migrants born in Scotland travelled from Canada and Australia to London to meet with the Prime Minister in Westminster on that memorable day. Scottish Members of Parliament also supported the nation’s apology in the House of Commons. The Member for North-East Fife, Sir Menzies Campbell said:

‘Is it not clear, from what the Prime Minister has said, that one of the most reprehensible features of this policy was the systematic deception of children and their parents? Do we need any further indication of just how unreasonable this policy was other than the fact that it had to be cloaked in such deception?’

1.16 The Prime Minister responded:

‘First, the deception was unacceptable, but secondly the results of that deception were that parents thought that their children were in this country, when they were not, and children thought that their parents were dead, when they were alive. It is a most cruel deception for children to be made to believe that something that they should know about, or have the chance to know about, could never be told to them. When dates, birthdays and names are changed to conceal the truth, it is completely reprehensible, as the right hon. and learned Gentleman said in his eloquent way. We must make this apology, not just for that reason, but for the other reasons that I have cited.’

2. Child Migration – Brief Historical Background

- 2.1 The origins of the scheme go back to 1618 when a hundred children left London for the new colony of Virginia, North America. The last child migrants arrived in Australia in 1970. It is estimated that child migration programmes were responsible for the removal of over 130,000 children from the UK mainly to Canada, New Zealand, Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia as it was known then) and Australia.
- 2.2 Britain is the only country in the world with a sustained history of child deportation which spans four centuries, and which was not significantly related to periods of war or civil unrest. The reality of this policy was to remove children, some only three years old, from their mothers and fathers and all that was familiar to them, and ship them thousands of miles away from their home country to institutions in distant lands within the Commonwealth.
- 2.3 Many child migrants, British boys and girls, were sent overseas by voluntary agencies such as the Fairbridge Society, established specifically for the purpose of migrating young children to populate the empire with "Good White British stock". Well known national charities such as Barnardos, which provided a wider range of child care services, along with the Church of England, the Methodist Church via the National Children's Homes and the Catholic Church also played major roles. The Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church and the Salvation Army were involved to a lesser extent. In the post-WW2 period, such charitable agencies were not required to obtain approval from the Home Secretary to migrate individual children, unlike local authorities. It was this lack of accountability and the lack of robust regulations which allowed the charities to drastically change the lives of thousands of children and their families forever.
- 2.4 In New Zealand, children were usually placed with foster parents, while those in Canada were entrusted to the care of farmers, often without sufficient preparation or supervision. A Canadian farmer was even charged with manslaughter; such was the extent of the cruelty (MH1). Very few children were legally adopted overseas and the vast majority in Australia spent their entire childhoods in large, bleak institutions or farm schools with up to three hundred and fifty children. In post war Britain, these large institutions were regarded as unfit for the care of vulnerable children and replaced by much smaller Homes with an emphasis on substitute family care.
- 2.5 Children were sent to New Zealand, Canada and Zimbabwe in the post WW2 period but these short lived schemes involved hundreds of children rather than the three thousand plus who were sent to Australia. In Canada, Fairbridge Farm School on Vancouver Island, the only institution involved, received just over 300 children from 1935-1948, while the larger New Zealand scheme ended in 1954 having accepted nearly 550 children. Child migration lacked a sustainable future as a modern child care policy option in these countries. However, in Australia, the last child migrants arrived as late as 1970.
- 2.6 Child migration was inspired by a variety of motives, none of which gave first priority to the needs of the children involved. Consequently, child migrants were viewed as a convenient source of cheap labour on Canada's farms and as a means of boosting Australia's small post-war population. Child migrants were viewed as a way to preserve a white, managerial elite in the former Rhodesia. Certain groups of children were excluded as countries would not accept children with disabilities or black children, for example. An early questionable motive for the schemes had been to maintain the racial unity of Britain's Empire.

- 2.7 There was a misguided view that these British children could somehow be given a fresh start many thousands of miles away from all that was familiar. Relationships with parents and siblings were often disregarded and actively discouraged. Children were separated from their siblings and occasionally sent away to different countries, frequently without the knowledge or consent of their parents. Even twins were separated. Children were often told that their parents were dead, when this was mostly untrue. The tragic reality for many children was appalling standards of care which fell well below accepted levels within British institutions at that time.
- 2.8 Far too many children experienced practices and policies which would not have been tolerated by British child care professionals in that era. Children as young as seven sent to institutions in Western Australia were involved in building works without adequate clothing, food or basic safety measures. Many were seriously injured in accidents at work at a time in their life when they would have been in school had they remained in the United Kingdom.
- 2.9 During the same period in Britain, in accordance with recommendations from the Curtis and Clyde reports from the mid-1940s, many children were fostered, not sent to institutions, because of advances in the knowledge of children's developmental needs. But, for most children destined to be migrated, there was no family life offered. In many respects, child migration lagged behind both public opinion and enlightened child care policies.
- 2.10 Many child migrants were told that they were 'orphans' - a socially constructed identity which did not reflect the truth about their parents. This label played an important role in preventing children from asking awkward questions about their family background and served the immediate interests, not of the children, but of those responsible for them. For other child migrants, similar results were achieved by different means.
- 2.11 Child migrants were not issued with passports or given citizenship in Australia. They had no proof of arrival in the country nor any coherent narrative for why they were sent in the first place. Some managed to get married on the strength of a letter from their local priest. Even today, there are continuing difficulties for some former child migrants trying to verify their identity and citizenship status.
- 2.12 Whether to reduce costs or to limit vital details to the minimum, agencies only sent short birth certificates with child migrants. As a result, the children did not even know their parents' names and this information was also not available to the receiving agencies. If this was an attempt to protect some children from the stigma of illegitimacy, it was frequently undermined by institutional staff regularly using derogatory references to illegitimacy.
- 2.13 The 'fresh start' philosophy assumed that a child's parents were a wholly negative influence. They were seen as a regrettable feature of a child's past life who should play no part in a child's future. Consequently, many agencies did not send any details of a child's family background with the child. These files remained in the United Kingdom so that, for example, child migrants who wish to obtain their records from Fairbridge have to apply to the archives at Liverpool University. Some files were not preserved; others were deliberately destroyed as happened to those in Rhodesia around 1960.
- 2.14 Throughout its long history, child migration has been punctuated by a series of scandals. The lack of educational provision, the overwork and inadequate pay, the suicides following episodes of ill - treatment, and the appalling evidence of protracted physical and sexual abuse have all featured in official inquiries or newspaper headlines in both nineteenth century Canada and South Africa as well as post-war New Zealand and Australia.

- 2.15 These variations on a theme represent different forms of child abuse, involving a particularly vulnerable, large group of British children whose interests have never been safeguarded effectively and consistently. Indeed, vulnerable children were made even more vulnerable by being sent overseas, a major design flaw in the schemes.
- 2.16 Unfortunately, lessons learned after bitter experience in one country have rarely been applied to child migration policies as a whole. In Canada, the Doyle Report published in 1875 cited evidence of ill – treatment, overwork, physical abuse, inadequate inspection regimes, a lack of consent to migration and the need to safeguard children’s sexual vulnerability. In 1924, prompted by serious concerns about the ill-treatment of child labourers, the Bondfield Report effectively stopped large-scale child migration to Canada that already involved nearly 90,000 children (MH2). The report noted that ‘the comparative helplessness of the child makes this form of migration the most liable to abuse’. Sadly, this argument was not followed to its logical conclusion in respect of those children who were later sent to Australia to face the same risks and abuse and become the subjects of further official Inquiries as a result of another series of scandals.

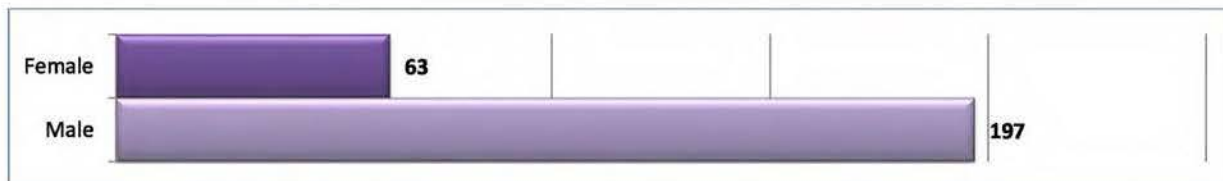
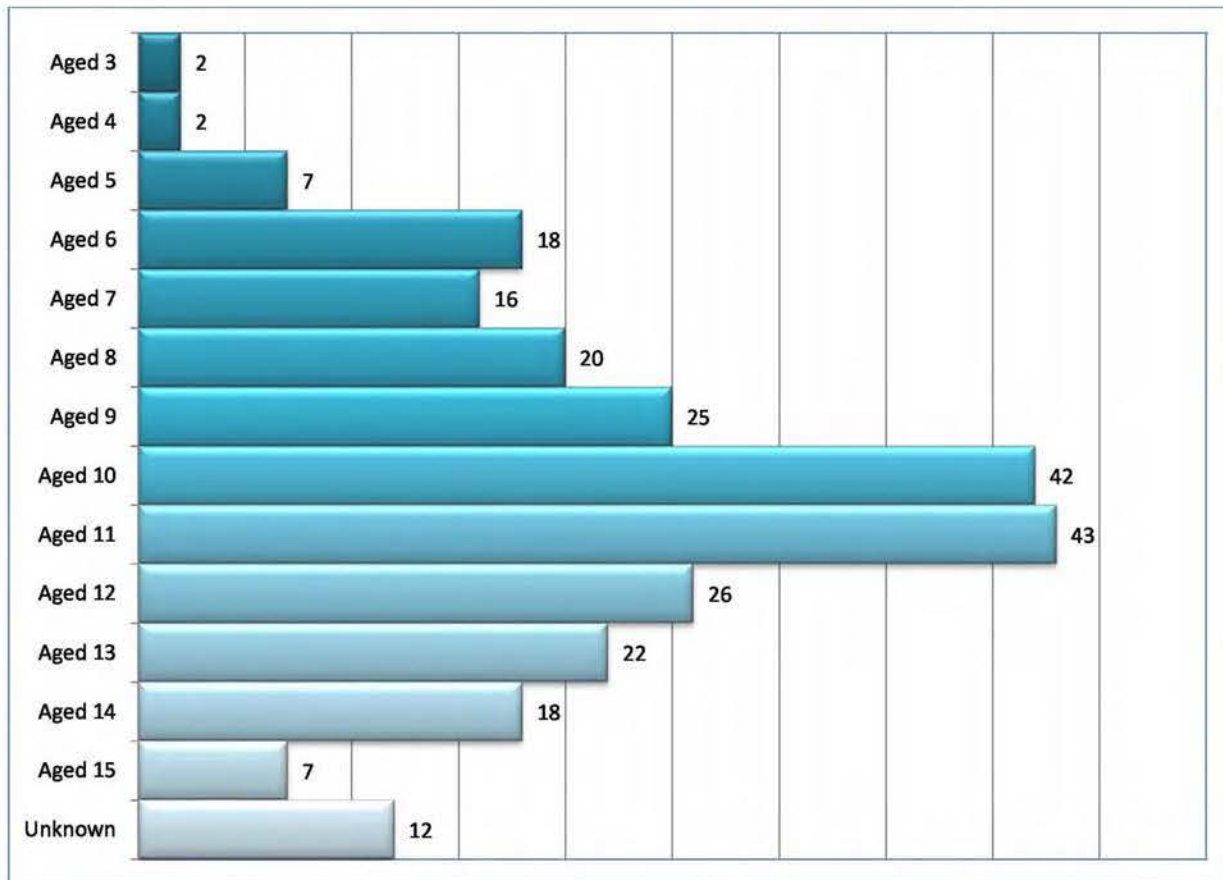
3. Timescale & institutions - Scottish child migration

- 3.1 Child migration from Scotland was at its peak in the late 19th-early 20th centuries. According to the Quarrier’s website, around seven thousand children were sent from The Orphan Homes of Scotland (later Quarriers) to Canada between 1870-1933. In later years up to 1963, child migration from Scotland was focussed on Australia with only small numbers - fewer than ten each - sent to Canada, Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia) and New Zealand.
- 3.2 CMT has knowledge of 260 children sent from Scotland between 1932 and 1963, but there may be considerably more. For example, it was common practice for the Sisters of Nazareth to send children across borders to wherever they had vacancies in their institutions in the UK; some Scottish children were placed at Nazareth Houses in Carlisle and Middlesbrough.
- 3.3 The Sisters of Nazareth played a key role in Scottish post war child migration. In other parts of the UK there was generally a broader range of voluntary agencies involved, such as the National Children’s Homes for example. However, agencies such as Quarriers, and to a lesser extent Barnardos and Fairbridge, also participated in the migration of children during the post war years.
- 3.4 Without full details of each child, it is not immediately obvious whether children sent from English ports had initially travelled across the border from Scotland or Wales. Similarly, Scottish children sent by Fairbridge were sometimes placed at Middlemore Homes in Birmingham for a period before being migrated. For example, a group of children sent to Fairbridge, Canada in 1941 from Middlemore are all recorded as English on the shipping list, yet it is known that at least one child was born in Scotland.

3.5 **SCOTTISH CHILD MIGRANTS WERE SENT ABROAD FROM THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS FROM 1935 - 1963:**

Barnardos
Corporation of Greenock (Youth)
Fairbridge
Father Hudson's
Good Shepherd, Edinburgh
Gravesend (St Marys)
Levenhall Boys Home
Middlemore Homes
Nazareth House Aberdeen
Nazareth House Carlisle
Nazareth House Ditton
Nazareth House Edinburgh
Nazareth House Glasgow
Nazareth House Kilmarnock
Nazareth House Middlesbrough
Nazareth House Southampton Romsey
Nazareth House Swansea
Nazareth House Termonbacca
Overseas League
Presbyterian Boys Party
Quarriers (Orphan Homes of Scotland)
Red House Home for Boys Musselburgh

3.6 The children's ages ranged from 3-15 years, but most were between 8-13 years old, while those aged 10 or 11 constituted just over a third of the total:



3.7 To our knowledge, only one child from local authority care is known to have been sent to Australia in 1962, aged 14.

Regarding the Scottish Government's position on child migration, a 1951 letter from the Chief Migration Officer at Australia House, London, to the Secretary of the Department of Immigration, Canberra refers to the Church of Scotland's Committee, chaired by Reverend Lewis LL Cameron for recruitment of Scottish child migrants.

The letter states: 'In regard to children of the age group which the Presbyterian and Scots Church Children's Aid Society wish to introduce... viz., 5 to 8 years, the Reverend Cameron thought it most unlikely that children of these ages would be available. He gave as his reason the fact that most of the recruitment would be done in Scotland and that in each case, his Committee seeks the consent of the Scottish Home Department to a child's migration. It would appear from past experience that this consent is often withheld in the case of young children...

The difficulty arises in relation to Section 17(2) of the Children's Act, a proviso of which restricts the giving of consent by the Secretary of State where a child is too young to form or express an opinion on the proposal that he should emigrate, in cases where a child is to travel with a parents, guardian or relative, or is to join a parent, guardian, relative or friend. It would appear that the view held by the Scottish Home Department is that the word 'friend' means an individual and not an organisation.

It is understood that the Fairbridge Society and the Australian Catholic Immigration Committee have experienced the same difficulty when seeking the Scottish Home Department's consent to the emigration of very young Scots children, whom they wish to consider under their respective nominations.'

(MH3)

4. Institutional experiences in Scotland

- 4.1 The harsh and often punitive standard of care in children's residential institutions across the United Kingdom in the 1940s and 50s is now better documented and understood following recent historical abuse inquiries. Evidence given before the Northern Ireland Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and, more recently, the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry include many examples of abusive culture and practices that mirror the testimony of former child migrants.
- 4.2 For instance, the SCAI case study into the Daughters of Charity includes descriptions familiar to former child migrants sent to Catholic institutions across Australia, in relation to bed wetting, forced labour and a culture of violence and fear.
- 4.3 The lack of emotional attachments or continuity of family life deprived children of the basic building blocks of identity, or any context for developing a narrative about personal experience and events. In most families, milestones like starting school or birthdays are usually marked by photographs, family stories and a steady reinforcement of personal and family identity. For child migrants in institutional care, it is unlikely anyone ever told them anything personal to them, for example that they 'looked just like grandma' or had their mother's gift for drawing.

- 4.4 Without continuity of caregivers, or the basics of identity such as photographs or school reports, many former child migrants have little memory of life in Scotland. What they can recall might be a traumatic incident or fragments, with many gaps sometimes spanning years. They may, for example, remember a particularly bitter winter, given that was often a contrast with their later life in Australia, but have no memory of family, school or any sense of place or belonging.
- 'I can't recall leaving Nazareth House, Kilmarnock. I don't remember ever being visited by family and in Australia I was always told by the nuns that we had no relatives. Or on occasions, we'd be told that our Mothers were whores who didn't want us, and that we should be grateful to the Sisters for taking care of us.'*
- 4.5 Many children did not know they had brothers and sisters in the same institution: *'I didn't know I had brothers until we were on the boat and we had to share a cabin.'* Some were referred to by numbers rather than names. This cruel practice of separating brothers and sisters has led to a lifetime of unnecessary suffering.
- 4.6 Those former child migrants with clear memories of their institutional experience in Scotland usually describe experiences of assault or other traumatic events, such as loss of family contact or particularly harsh or unjust punishments. The majority, however, have little or no recall of life before their migration. This vacuum of knowledge about their lives is a source of confusion and continuing distress for many former child migrants.
- 4.7 The structure of different institutional settings clearly had a significant impact on former child migrants' experiences, for example between large, highly regimented institutions such as the Nazareth Houses compared with more modern, cottage style accommodation at Quarriers.
- 4.8 Those adults in charge of individual cottages had the opportunity to set the culture and environment for the children with potential to create a more home-like environment. Within larger institutions, the culture was generally rigid and authoritarian, with rules, bells and no apparent recognition or acknowledgment of a child's individual needs.
- 4.9 Themes often reported to CMT clearly demonstrate abusive institutional practices in relation to common childhood issues, such as bed wetting. Despite a better understanding of children's development, and behavioural impact of trauma and loss by the 1940s, children who stood out in any way were usually perceived as defiant or 'bold.' The consistent description of cruel and humiliating punishments to children who disrupted the daily institutional routine is shocking.
- 4.10 Children were severely punished and labelled as 'wilful and dirty.' Bedwetting was usually perceived by staff in religious settings as deliberate, and a serious character flaw that warranted beating and public humiliation. Another common response was the loss of whatever few privileges children enjoyed in such a bleak setting. This was a further damaging influence on vulnerable children, contributing to lifelong anxiety and loss of self-esteem for many former child migrants.
- 4.11 Some former child migrants recall the demeanour of institutional staff in vivid detail: *'She would bellow at me to get on with my work, and hit me if I so much as looked at her. When I saw her coming, I would lower my eyes to avoid being noticed.'*

- 4.12 There is a consistency in the detail of bullying and brutality across many institutions, with an emphasis on the overwhelming size and terror of the perpetrator from a young child's viewpoint. There is little doubt these institutions had an entrenched culture of abuse rather than merely tolerating the actions of a few rogue individuals.
- 4.13 Children were beaten with straps, canes and fists. They were hit across the head or had their ears 'boxed,' sometimes leading to injury and permanent hearing loss.
- 4.14 The pattern of assaults is usually described as either random and sudden, or highly ritualised to cause maximum pain and humiliation. 'She would squeeze my fingers together and then cane me across the fingertips to make sure it hurt more.' Former child migrants sometimes describe scanning the faces of their abusers for danger and trying to placate, hide or submit.
- 4.15 The daily environment in the larger institutions is usually described as organised with rigid, competitive and brutal regimes. Children were forced to fend for themselves as there was never enough food or 'privileges' to meet a young child's basic needs. 'We used to fight over the scraps from the nuns' plates.' Bullying is a consistent theme and an obvious consequence of deprivation through failure to provide for the children's basic needs.
- 4.16 The lack of warmth and safety in many institutions is mentioned by most former child migrants, particularly in describing bathing and other routines. Many former child migrants describe large, cold bathrooms and a race to get out as quickly as possible, before the bath water turned grey and murky. 'You never wanted to be the last one in – you came out dirtier than you started.'
- 4.17 Frequently, bathrooms were the scene of punishments and beatings; naked children lined up for a cold, brutal encounter before a comfortless night in beds that lacked adequate blankets and offered no protection from predatory assaults. In Catholic institutions, the routine use of disinfectants such as 'Jeyes fluid' made miserable bathing experiences much worse, with some children speaking of their eyes, skin and nose burning from the fumes of harsh chemicals.
- 4.18 Institutions enforced obedience and conformity. Children learned to accept pain and injustice, and experienced the punitive consequences of speaking out. They learned that their individual needs were of little consequence to adults. This amounted to a form of grooming. For children later sent to predatory regimes particularly in Western Australia, such lessons in total obedience ensured a heightened level of vulnerability for the ordeal that awaited.

5. Process of Selection

- 5.1 There are few records available which explain the selection of children for migration to Australia. The Trust has rarely seen an agency file for a child sent from Scotland that documented the reasons for a decision, let alone considered the potential risks or alternatives.
- 5.2 The level of detail held in institutional files varies enormously; for example, Quarriers' files often provide some background history and context surrounding separation from family, whereas Catholic agency files frequently have little more than sacramental information.

5.3 The message delivered to explain child migration by the sending agencies over decades was that children had few prospects in the UK and would have better opportunities in Australia - and a warmer climate. The reality of the exploitation for child labour, abusive treatment, low priority given to education and continuing deception about the children's identities rather undermines this particularly optimistic propaganda.

5.4 Those children in care who did not have strong family relationships in Scotland were considered to be suitable candidates. Yet there were others who had at least one parent actively involved in their lives, who were also selected.

'My entire childhood was spent in institutions. None of them were very good places, but I can't honestly make any major complaints about treatment in Scotland, except they sent me away from my family and took away from me any chance of ever getting to know my mother. By the time I returned to Scotland as an adult, she had already died.' (sent from Nazareth House Aberdeen to Australia, 1952).

5.5 A key motivating factor, particularly from the early 1950s was the pressure to fill quotas, given the number of children actually available fell far short of post war expectations. There is evidence relating to British Catholic Rescue Societies responding to pressing demand from the Australian Federal Catholic Immigration Committee, which at times became quite insistent in its tone.

5.6 The separation of brothers and sisters through child migration was common practice. Indeed, brothers and sisters were rarely accommodated together in Catholic institutions which were usually single sex environments once children reached the age of four or five. For example, a sibling group of four were sent to Australia separately, over three journeys several years apart in the 1950s. On arrival, no consideration was given to their relationships; three were placed in Victoria whilst the fourth child was sent to Western Australia on the other side of the country. To complicate further any chance of finding one another, the spelling of the children's surnames was altered either deliberately or through lack of care, and they were unable to find one another for more than forty years until CMT was established.

5.7 Similarly, a sibling group of nine children were sent to Fairbridge institutions in Australia and Canada. The decision to send one child alone to Canada and the remaining eight siblings to Australia over a number of years beggars belief in its callous indifference to all the children's family identity.

5.8 It is difficult to justify a decision to permanently separate brothers and sisters as serving the children's best interests, particularly if it was also motivated by a child migration policy that was struggling to find available children to fill quotas and beds in newly constructed institutions.

5.9 Former Child Migrants experience of selection

Some former child migrants recall being asked, usually in the classroom, 'Who would like to go to Australia?' *'A man dressed in black came in and talked about riding horses to school every day and having fresh fruit and a wonderful life. We all put up our hands, though we had no idea where Australia was or what it all meant.'*

- 5.10 At Nazareth House Kilmarnock, 'Sister LFL came and got me from the playroom and took me to her office. She had a picture of a ship and she asked me if I would like to go for a ride on it? What eight-year-old wouldn't?'

5.11 **Child Trafficking**

Evidence submitted to the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the more recent UK Independent Inquiry into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) reveals a deeply concerning issue of child trafficking.

- 5.12 The Australian Royal Commission found that in 'each of the decades from 1919 to the 1960's the relevant Christian Brothers' Provincial Council knew of allegations of sexual abuse against some Brothers in Christian Brothers' institutions around Australia'. (Case Study 11, Finding 8)
- 5.13 The IICSA inquiry in 2016 heard evidence that in 1946, Brother Conlon visited the UK for the purposes of recruiting British Children for migration to Catholic Institutions in Australia and was aware at the time, of concerns regarding the risk of abuse to children within these institutions. In 1942, Brother Conlon wrote to Brother Assistant stating that ' referred to recent cases as alarming to danger of publicity. He said that was involved in similar cases in Geelong He spoke of the necessity of warnings in the Novitiate and of letting the Novice Master know something of these happenings... I came away with the feeling that we do not fully realise the seriousness of the cases that we have had before us.'(MH4) Furthermore, there is evidence that Brother Conlon and Fr Stinson (Director of Catholic Child Welfare in Western Australia) signed a number of official migration forms themselves authorising child migrants to be sent to Australia, and also by-passed established procedures so that institutions were not inspected or approved in advance. (MH5)
- 5.14 Former Child Migrants gave evidence to the IICSA hearings during February and March 2017, during which they questioned if they were trafficked to Australia for the purposes of sexual exploitation having already experienced this in UK institutions. (IICSA - Child Migration Programmes case study public hearing transcript 2 March 2017, Day 4 page 50-51)
- 5.15 The evidence raises questions as to whether children were being trafficked to the Dominions for the purposes of carrying out hard labour and sexual abuse. It is shocking and horrific to discover that officials could be recruiting children to institutions despite their knowledge of the risk of sexual abuse. Whether this was by design rather than the result of poor standards and neglect remains a matter for investigation. However, in my view, this would clearly amount to a form of child trafficking today. In other words, the organised movement of a child, with the knowledge that they were likely to be exploited and that the child would be rendered vulnerable, forms part of child trafficking networks today.
- 5.16 Children are made additionally vulnerable by the fact that they are unknown, have no relatives at their destination and have a lack of access to basic education or medical services. For predators, there was little risk any parent would come for their child or ask awkward questions. Local authorities failed to challenge the power of the institutions or enforce minimum standards to monitor and protect the children. The questions which former child migrants have been asking for many years are only now starting to be answered.

6. Parental knowledge and consent for migration

- 6.1 Child migration largely operated within a culture of deception. The Trust has interviewed hundreds former child migrants and their mothers and fathers over thirty years exploring issues of separation from family, including the degree of knowledge and consent for the migration of children.
- 6.2 Most Scottish child migrants known to CMT were sent from institutions in the UK rather than directly from their parents' care.
- 6.3 The culture of the institutions, and attitudes towards child migrants' mothers in particular, have been outlined during the Trust's early work with parents of former child migrants. Many described harsh, oppressive and bullying experiences when trying to visit their child placed within an institution. The following example set in the late 1940's is taken from a 1998 interview with a mother whose child had been placed at a Nazareth House in England:
- 'A few days before the Sunday visiting time, the knot would start in my stomach, and I couldn't eat for days. I'd press my best coat and get myself ready for the ordeal of facing the Sisters. I still remember the look on that nun's face as she stood over me with her arms folded like I was trash off the street.
- They sat me in the parlour and would bring in my little girl; sit her at the other end of the table as if we were strangers. The nun would keep an eye on us and I wasn't allowed to give her cakes or sweets, I didn't even feel I could pick her up without with making them disapprove. In the end, it got so hard I used to wait by the gate, trying to catch a glimpse of her. One day I went in and they told me she'd been 'adopted by Americans' and I'd never see her again.' (The child had been migrated to Australia; they were reunited by CMT in 1999. Reunion featured on [REDACTED] television programme in 2000).
- 6.4 Many parents describe a similar deception to the example above – but were usually told their child had been adopted in the UK. From the Trust's experience, few Scottish parents gave written consent while the majority were never informed that their children had left the country. Further research should be undertaken on this matter.
- 6.5 It is unknown whether the institutions made any concerted effort to consult with parents prior to the migration of their children, due to the limited paperwork for most former child migrants from religious institutions. However, the common deception whereby parents were falsely told their children had been adopted suggests there was little regard for their parental rights.

7. Post-War Placements in Australia, Canada, Rhodesia and New Zealand

- 7.1 Following the first major wave of child migration from Scotland, smaller numbers were sent to countries within the Commonwealth, including Rhodesia and Canada through the Fairbridge Society, and in very small numbers to New Zealand through the Royal Overseas League. The lack of detailed records means that precise figures are difficult to establish.

7.2 Scottish child migrants went to the following institutions and placements:

Canada: Prince of Wales Farm School, Duncan, Vancouver Island, British Columbia. CMT is aware of only 3 children sent from Scotland in 1941, and they had all been placed initially at Middlemore Homes in Birmingham ahead of their departure.

Southern Rhodesia: Kingsley Fairbridge Memorial College, Bulawayo

New Zealand: Children were boarded out with farmers and families, technically supervised by the New Zealand Government who paid subsidies to those providing placements for child migrants between 1949 and 1954. This was a small scheme. A total of 549 children were sent to New Zealand but few are known to CMT to have come from Scotland.

Australia: The great majority of the 250+ Scottish child migrants known to CMT were sent to Australia between 1938 and 1963 and placed in institutions affiliated with the faith-based agency or a non-government agency that arranged their migration. For example, children from The Orphan Homes of Scotland (Quarriers) were placed at Burnside in Sydney or Dhurringile in rural Victoria, both of which were Presbyterian institutions. Children sent by the Sisters of Nazareth were placed at Catholic institutions across Australia, principally run by the Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of Nazareth, Christian Brothers, Salesian Brothers or the Daughters of Charity from the late 1930s until the late 1950s.

Institutions in Australia that received Scottish children:

- St Vincent de Paul Orphanage, (Goodwood), Adelaide, South Australia
- St Joseph's Orphanage, Neerkol, near Rockhampton, Queensland
- Nazareth House, East Camberwell, Melbourne, Victoria
- Nazareth House, Geraldton, Western Australia
- St Vincent's Orphanage, Castledare, Perth, Western Australia
- Clontarf Boys' Town, Perth, Western Australia
- St Joseph's, Subiaco, Perth, Western Australia
- St Joseph's Farm School, Bindoon, Western Australia
- St Mary's Agricultural School, Tardun, Western Australia
- St John Bosco Boys' Town, Hobart, Tasmania
- St John's Orphanage, Thurgoona, New South Wales
- Murray-Dwyer Boys' Orphanage, Mayfield, New South Wales
- Burnside Presbyterian Orphan Homes, Parramatta, New South Wales
- Dhurringile Rural Training Farm, Tatura, Victoria
- Lady Northcote Children's Farm School (Victoria)
- Barnardos, New South Wales
- Fairbridge Molong, New South Wales
- Fairbridge Pinjarra, Western Australia
- Swan Homes (Western Australia)
- Clarendon Homes (Tasmania)

7.3 The seven underlined institutions were included or seen as candidates for the Home Office 'Blacklist' following the 1956 Fact Finding Mission to Australia. This recommended that no further children be sent until several improvements relating to quality of care issues were addressed. That advice was not fully implemented.

8. Child migration across borders

- 8.1 Child migration was a national child care policy established between the United Kingdom and four Commonwealth countries; Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the former Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. The operation of the policy differed significantly between different voluntary child care agencies, for example, children sent to Rhodesia were included within the scheme on their parents' application.
- 8.2 In the absence of a central database of all children migrated from the UK under these schemes it is difficult to be precise regarding the children's country of origin.
- 8.3 Children were frequently moved across borders between the four countries of the UK - and also to and from the Irish Republic. That meant some children who were citizens of the Irish Republic were sent abroad under the Commonwealth child migration schemes. Catholic agencies in particular appear to have paid little heed to national borders.
- 8.4 Following is an example of a child migrant, a citizen of the Irish Republic who was twice moved across the border between Eire and Northern Ireland, and for whom the decision for his deportation to Australia was made in Scotland. There was no parental consent.

[REDACTED] timeline		
Year	Date	Event
1937	[REDACTED] 1937	[REDACTED] born in County Home [REDACTED] Co. Monaghan
	[REDACTED] 1937	Baptised [REDACTED]
	[REDACTED] 1937	According to [REDACTED] hospital register [REDACTED] was discharged and admitted to Nazareth House, Derry
1939	[REDACTED] 1939	Admitted to Nazareth House, Sligo – recommended by Mother Elizabeth, Nazareth House, Derry
1947	[REDACTED] 1947	Authorisation for migration documents signed in Edinburgh by Brother P.A. Conlon, for and on behalf of the Scottish Migration Secretary
	[REDACTED] 1947	Migrated from Termonbacca, Derry, on the 'Asturias'
	[REDACTED] 1947	Arrived in Fremantle, Western Australia, aboard the 'Asturias'

9. The Experience of Child Migrants

IDENTITY

- 9.1 It is important to discuss personal identity in general terms to understand the unique experience of former Child Migrants. The lack of attachments or continuity of family life deprived these children of the basic building blocks of identity and any context for developing a narrative about personal experience and events.
- 9.2 There are, of course, varying degrees of resilience within this community. Even those with successful careers still feel overwhelmed, at times, by the many experiences of loss and deprivation which they have suffered before and after their deportation. Many lacked a coherent understanding of both the reasons for their deportation and their family history. The Trust has sought to fill in these vital missing pieces towards recovery and building a stronger identity.
- 9.3 Some of the agencies concerned with child migration did not employ qualified social work staff. Often it appears there was little appreciation of the significance of key information for a child's emotional development, self-image and identity, even considering the practice standards of the time. In addition, it is clear that some faith agencies felt it was justifiable and preferable to avoid the stigma of illegitimacy, by telling the children they were orphans.
- 9.4 Consequently, as adults, many former Child Migrants were devastated to learn that their parents were still alive when they were sent overseas and for many years afterwards. Most could probably have met their families if they had been told the truth. Their confusion for decades was reinforced by a popular perception in Australia that most child migrants were 'war orphans'. In fact, this description was true of very few children, but it served to prevent awkward questions being asked.
- 9.5 These issues are illuminated by Mr John Ross in his Inspection Report on St Vincent's Orphanage, Castledare in 1956 where he states as follows: *'The migrant boys come from Roman Catholic children's homes in England, no information is available about their history or background; the Principal said he thought that none of them had any relatives.'* (MH6) Ross concluded that it *"was doubtful whether provision for even their physical welfare can be regarded as adequate. Anything in the nature of individual treatment is clearly out of the question"*.
- 9.6 This provides the context where insufficient attention was devoted to the children's individual identities. The UN Declaration on Human Rights talks about the right of the child to family life. I would argue that family is identity and belonging. This is the very place where we learn who we are and what shapes our identity, including our family history.
- 9.7 The basic foundations of personal identity start with our date and place of birth, the names of our parents and the correct spelling of our names. Even these fundamental rights were a mystery to many former child migrants when first interviewed by the Trust. Some former Child Migrants were deported overseas with their brothers and sisters. However, once they arrived it was only by chance that any would remain with their siblings. Often, they were separated and would lose contact for decades. There was a complete disregard for these children's right to a family life in terms of decisions within the control of the agencies.

- 9.8 With regards to sexual abuse, former Child Migrant testimonies reveal that it took years, sometimes a generation, to talk about what happened to them. This long delay in disclosure was noted by the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to the Child Sexual Abuse. The stripping of identity exacerbated by enormous grief and loss can prevent people from speaking out. In the early days, the critical issues presented to CMT concerned the desperate longing for family and identity, even though their physical abuse was present from day one.
- 9.9 In Adelaide, I recall being told about a young girl being dragged by her plaits and having her hair cut off with garden shears for singing British nursery rhymes. It is both a form of degradation and also an assault on a young girl and her sense of personal and cultural identity. This suggested that there was no part of the body that was sacred.
- 9.10 We were alerted to torture and the stripping of identity from the start. We then moved to a position where every other former Child Migrant was discussing abuses involving food, bed-wetting and showers. Numerous media articles mentioned these issues.
- 9.11 However, I was much more careful when discussing sexual abuse, as this was an especially painful and private matter for former Child Migrants – few of whom fully understood the criminal nature of the offences committed against them.

SLAVERY AND TORTURE

- 9.12 Children held in institutions were sometimes ritually stripped naked in front of other children and beaten. At Nazareth House, Geraldton in Western Australia, young girls seen holding hands with their friends were forced to march around in front of everybody with urine-soaked sheets over their heads. Sometimes they were made to wear signs, with slogans such as 'I am a lap dog.' This cruel and deliberate humiliation of young children contributed to major difficulties in friendship formation and feelings of isolation. They were robbed of a sense of comfort or well-being and many live today with terrible anxiety.
- 9.13 These stories are prevalent across the different institutions. The shearing of a little girl's hair, whilst others were forced to watch with an implied threat they could be next, ritualistic punishments and the use of implements to beat children are all forms of cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment.
- 9.14 Some child migrants in Australia lived in conditions of slavery. Document MH7 which is a letter to the Minister for Lands and Immigration from the Under – Secretary, dated 1948 clearly states:
- '2. I am of the opinion that if the Imperial Government becomes aware of the existing conditions at Bindoon, the State will be called upon for more drastic control at the centre.*
- 3. On file 6060/47 attached there are reports from Messrs. Mather (Immigration Department) and Fogarty (Child Welfare Department) showing that all the boys over 14 years of age are out working at Bindoon and not receiving school tuition. The reports indicate that no payment is being made for the work done. It might possibly be claimed that they were only worth their keep, but this is open to question in regard to the elder boys, and is a matter that shall have to be decided quickly to be put on a proper basis.'*

9.15 Children were given inadequate education and were forced to work in dangerous conditions without remuneration. In Western Australia, the boys were sent to work on the land whilst the girls were destined for domestic service. Some of the children died as a result of accidents or clear negligence through lack of adult supervision whilst carrying out dangerous work.

9.16 Extracts from Australian Senate Report "Lost Innocents: Righting the Record - Report on child migration" 2001. Chapter 4: Deaths at Institutions:

The Committee received evidence that a number of child migrants had died while in the care of institutions. While these included serious vehicular accidents, occasioning death and life-long injury, and drowning in a farm dam, the cases of six boys who died at Tardun, Bindoon or Clontarf between 1943 and 1958 were specifically raised with the Committee.

Concern was expressed that although the death certificate for each case contained a statement by the coroner as to the cause of death, it appears that not all of the deaths were further investigated by a coronial inquest.

Four of these boys died from fractured skulls. In one instance, the fractured skull was alleged to have been sustained after a fall from a balcony at night.

9.17 Correspondence from the Western Australian Attorney-General's Chief of Staff in November 2000, cited in evidence, indicated that 'the records relating to those deaths had been destroyed. There had not been any record of any request for the Coroner at the time to conduct an inquest... There is no evidence that the guardians of these child migrants had, at any time, made any attempt to inquire into the violent deaths of child migrants'.

██████████, BINDOON

CMT has taken a statement from a former child migrant who was present when ██████████ from Aberdeen was killed at Bindoon in 1957 aged 12, in an accident that points to criminal negligence on the part of the Christian Brothers.

Four boys were given the task of loading a cart with heavy bags of fertiliser, which they were told to take to the dam and wash before it could be used. The cart should have been pulled by a horse but instead four boys, aged from twelve to fourteen, were given the task. The cart was very heavy when loaded. Coming down the hill to the dam they lost control of the cart and it flipped over.

██████████ was killed instantly. The fourteen-year-old boy whose job it was to take the role of a horse and pull the cart was held responsible by the Christian Brothers and made to dig the grave and bury his friend. The death certificate lacks any information about ██████████ family – his parents' details are recorded as 'unknown.'

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO NEGLECT AND ABUSE

- 9.18 The level of abuse and assault described in this chapter is totally indefensible.
- 9.19 Under any understanding of what constitutes minimum standards in relation to the care of children, the treatment of child migrants in Australian institutions will remain a very dark chapter in the country's child care history.
- 9.20 A number of interacting factors – isolated institutions, few trained staff, vulnerable residents and little external scrutiny - have been identified as increasing the risk of abuse in institutions. However, the consequences of these risks to child welfare should have been apparent at the time and acted upon by the responsible agencies and organisations. The fact that they were not, ultimately led to the levels of abuse suffered by a great many of the children.
- 9.21 In relation to the serious violations including physical and sexual assaults of child migrants reported to CMT, often these occurred in the context of the children's forced labour in remote institutional settings. On farms, children on their own were vulnerable to exploitation, deprivation and sexual abuse. Children were placed in isolated conditions under the control of predators. In other cases, girls would be sent to work on remote, rural farms and desperately sought to escape their placement due to sexual abuse. Sometimes they absconded and were punished for running away and then subjected to further assaults by the perpetrators. For some, this established a lifetime pattern of assaults and violent oppressive relationships.
- 9.22 One former child migrant came to see me one December and noticed the Christmas tree, which has become one of our annual rituals. The tree reminded him of being taken out of the orphanage to visit a professional family, to sing carols. He explained to me how after he had sung, he was taken upstairs and raped.
- 9.23 Sexual assaults happened both in and out of the institutions and in many cases the children were handed over to their attackers by the institutions and then returned without consequences. Frequently, the institutions publicly advertised for people to take children over Christmas and the New Year period. Clearly this was another opportunity for predators, given the lack of effective screening or monitoring involved in these placements.
- 9.24 A Scottish child migrant spoke with CMT about her experience of the most appalling assault, after she was seen in a local park 'talking with boys' on the way back to the institution after school.
- 9.25 *'It was all innocent enough, and an incredible relief to finally have something like a normal life for a teenage girl. But it was not to last. We were seen by one of the office workers from Nazareth House, who reported us to the nuns. One night, when we got back to Nazareth House, we were dragged upstairs and presented to the local priest, Father ^{LSX} [REDACTED], and the doctor whom the nuns always used, Dr ^{LSY} [REDACTED].'*
- 9.26 *We were taken into a room one by one to have our virginity tested by the doctor, with both the priest and the nun (Sister ^{LSV} [REDACTED]) watching. That involved a vaginal examination. I was sexually assaulted by the doctor, aided by the Sisters of Nazareth and the local priest.'*

10. The Dehumanisation of the Child

- 10.1 Alongside the stripping of identity through lack of documentation about the detail of their lives, the children were frequently held in deplorable conditions and deprived of adequate bedding, shoes, clothing or underwear.
- 10.2 Contemporaneous documents reference the fact that the boys did not wear shoes even when involved in building works [MH8, MH9] and were given insufficient and poor-quality food.
- 10.3 Some former child migrants have complained that they were never known by their names within the institutions, but instead were issued with numbers. 'I was number 57' one man told me. Others have described having their name changed on arrival, without explanation and to the great distress and confusion of the child concerned.
- 10.4 Over the years, I have come to understand that this was a degrading and dehumanising process which stripped away the very essence of the child. The child was made invisible, as indeed were the mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters. Child Migrants have described to me how they felt as if they did not exist. They have also told me that animals were given better treatment and certainly better food than they received.
- 10.5 Descriptions of some child labour practices are breath-taking in their level of creative negligence and dehumanisation of the children.
- 10.6 A child migrant from Scotland spoke of window cleaning practices at Nazareth House, Camberwell in Melbourne, Australia in the mid-1950s: *'...little girls were forced to clean the outside of windows several stories above the ground. I remember girls of nine or ten years washing the outside of windows on the second or third floors, held by their legs - not by adults but by other children! No safety equipment. If a child had let go or sneezed at the wrong time, it's unlikely we would have survived a fall from that height.'*

11. Child Sexual Abuse and Former Child Migrants

- 11.1 As the testimonies of individual child migrants make clear, many experienced a crushing catalogue of sexual abuse, deprivation, violence and abusive institutional practices and a childhood of constant terror and hyper-vigilance, without safety or hope. There was no escape, nobody to tell and nobody to save them.
- 11.2 Many can remember only a few positive moments across their entire childhood. The absence of attachment to any positive adult left them further vulnerable and compounded the damage, with no adult to offer comfort or safety.
- 11.3 Major initiatives such as the Australian Royal Commission and redress schemes over the past twenty years have shone the spotlight on historical sexual abuse, encouraging former Child Migrants to speak about their experiences for a specific purpose. Frequently, this has been the first disclosure of a painful childhood kept secret from partners and adult children, and a continuing source of fear and shame.

11.4 For some, those painful experiences began in the UK. CMT is aware that some Child Migrants were sexually abused in UK Children's Homes by members of staff before being deported. Indeed, some expressed a belief they were sent to Australia to conceal this abuse.

Adults disclosing historical childhood sexual assault frequently present with one or more of the following enduring effects of their experiences:

- Low self-esteem and a pervasive sense of pessimism
- Continuing impact of trauma that intrudes on many areas of life and relationships
- Heightened sense of guilt, shame and personal responsibility for the abuse
- Social isolation and difficulty forming close, trusting or intimate relationships
- High risk-taking behaviours throughout life and recourse to substance abuse or alcohol as a form of self-medicating behaviour
- Recurrent mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, chronic sleep disorder, panic attacks, flashbacks and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Literacy issues, limited job prospects and sometimes difficulties with authority figures
- Prolonged delays – often decades – between the abuse and eventual disclosure

11.5 Former Child Migrants often grapple with combinations of these symptoms for long periods of time. The complex and adverse circumstances of their childhood, particularly loss of personal and family identity coupled with deportation alone at a young, vulnerable age, frequently impose additional layers of harm.

11.6 Only a minority of former Child Migrants have approached CMT specifically to address issues relating to institutional sexual assault. Rather, these issues have emerged within a broader social work service addressing childhood deprivation, various forms of abuse and above all the need for family and identity.

11.7 CMT considers barbaric practices such as removal of identity and de-humanisation of the child to be a deliberate form of grooming, on a continuum of criminal abuse that often includes sexual assault. It could also be described as torture. Following such sustained mistreatment, few children would dare resist and fewer still would dare to report the assault.

11.8 Apart from the systematic stripping of identity, both before and after their deportation from the UK, Child Migrants frequently describe deprivation of the most basic and fundamental comforts - adequate food, clothing, warmth and safety - across many of the institutions that received child migrants. The children were universally deprived of privacy. Even the toilets and bathrooms often lacked doors and adults were continually present and often behaved inappropriately.

11.9 The high incidence of cruel, humiliating and unduly harsh punishments appear to be deliberate strategies to strip former Child Migrants of their self-worth, leaving them exquisitely vulnerable to any form of criminal abuse.

11.10 Examples of such practices include:

- Brutally shaving off their hair.
- Public, ritualised and brutally excessive floggings, usually involving stripping the children's clothes before beating them, witnessed by large groups of children.

- Removal (theft) of their clothes and any personal possessions brought from the United Kingdom
- Separation of siblings (twins included) and discouragement of friendships.
- Humiliating punishments for bed wetting, including forcing the children to wear urine soaked sheets over their heads and parade around the institution wearing degrading signs.
- Forced, excessive and exhausting age-inappropriate manual labour, described by most child migrants as 'slave labour.'
- Stigmatising, degrading and untruthful labels regarding the children's origins – at best, called 'war orphans,' which was simply not the case. Children at Bindoon recall the principal bellowing at them: 'You are the sons of Whores!'
- Manipulation and emotional abuse, for example through interrogation of individual children to name the culprits of often fabricated 'crimes,' was a frequent abusive practice in the institutions. There was often a sexualised aspect, with accusations of mutual masturbation that often preceded a dangerous encounter or assault. The impact was to generate feelings of isolation, mistrust and fear amongst the children and reinforce the power and control of abusive adults.
- Torture and killing of animals in front of the children, sometimes presented as an explicit threat with a clear message of the requirement for total obedience and the painful, inevitable consequences of resistance.

11.11 For some former Child Migrants, despite appalling histories of severe and repeated sexual assault by multiple perpetrators over several years, the impact of sexual abuse is not presented as the most damaging element of their childhood. Rather it appears to have been the lack of family, the absence of safety, and the constant presence of threat and terror that have determined the longer-term impact on their personal development and psychological well-being. In the words of one former Child Migrant: "there was no-one watching over me."

11.12 There are many long term, debilitating consequences of childhood sexual assault for child migrants. The most obvious relate to difficulties in maintaining close or intimate relationships. A large proportion, particularly the men, have lived alone throughout their adult lives.

11.13 Many are unable to submit to basic medical examinations as the threat of invasive medical procedures often triggers heightened anxiety relating to childhood assault. Some former Child Migrants required corrective surgery as adults because of the violence and brutality of their childhood abuse.

11.14 These issues have a continuing and increasingly serious impact on the management of personal health, particularly as former Child Migrants move into older age. There can be a heightened layer of vulnerability at critical times such as hospital admission.

11.15 Sometimes, the fear of adults touching their bodies may become so acute that they discharge themselves rather than submit to urgently needed medical treatment. I recall once being telephoned by a doctor, desperate for a child migrant to consent to an urgent medical procedure, and seeking my intervention to persuade cooperation.

12. Reporting Abuse

- 12.1 Most former Child Migrants report living conditions within the institutions that fit more closely to descriptions of prisons than children's residential homes. They describe barbaric, brutalising treatment without safety or access to caring adults, from whom they could seek either comfort or protection. In the worst institutions, the scale of criminal abuse experienced by former Child Migrants is extreme. In such conditions, it could be expected most children would feel unable to disclose sexual assault by perpetrators who exercised total control over their lives.
- 12.2 Despite this reality, a few children did speak out to adults at the institution and, occasionally, to police. CMT is unaware of any situation in Australia in which effective, external measures were taken as a result. Very rarely, a member of staff would be transferred to another institution in what could be equally described as a cover up.
- 12.3 Former Child Migrants have described the consequences of children disclosing as leading to further abuse and harassment. Some were branded 'liars' and publicly flogged as a warning, others were made to feel responsible for their own abuse. One boy at Bindoon recounted telling the priest about multiple sexual assaults. The priest advised he should 'not make himself so attractive to the Brothers, don't pull your shorts up so high or do your hair like that.'
- 12.4 The good standing and reputation of the churches and charities appears to have blinded the wider community to the criminal abuses taking place on such a huge scale. A hierarchy of credibility ensured that a child's word counted for little against an adult voice. One former child migrant described telling the 'lady from the welfare' (Miss Margaret Sanderson) that he was being abused and was told to wait in Brother Doyle's office. Miss Sanderson did not return to talk with him, but Brother Doyle did, and the boy was flogged.
- 12.5 CMT has never seen any documentation from institutional files detailing contemporary accounts of disclosures of serious abuse. A small number of former Child Migrants report that they disclosed details of abuse to police whilst they were still held at the institutions and the perpetrators were active and present. For example, particularly in Western Australia, some Child Migrants absconded from institutions following brutal beatings or for fear of continuing sexual assault.
- 12.6 Inevitably, they were found by police officers and returned to the institution, where they were further punished and often held in traumatic, secure isolation. Some report that they were 'made an example of' by being publicly flogged in front of the other children as a warning to others not to abscond.
- 12.7 A consistent theme of former Child Migrants' accounts was that when the police returned them as 'runaways' to the institutions, the police met privately with institutional staff with a resulting cover up. The children were not asked by police why they ran away. The only consequences for anyone befell the child migrant, for breaking the code and seeking to stop the abuse.

- 12.8 According to one Child Migrant, a male member of the Fairbridge staff in Vancouver, Canada who sexually assaulted him as a child of six later received a custodial sentence for assaulting young boys. This appears to be an exception.
- 12.9 A growing awareness of abusive institutional cultures revealed through various public inquiries into historical institutional abuse has led to the development of therapeutic practices and a better understanding of the long-term impact of childhood sexual abuse upon adult life. There is generally now acceptance that for some people, especially those who have suffered more severe or repeated episodes of abuse, their need for professional support may be lifelong.
- 12.10 The Trust estimates that over 70% of child migrants experienced serious abuse in Australian institutions. It is established that excessive physical punishments, forced child labour, inadequate food and educational deprivation were common features of these institutions. Equally damaging was the brutal culture of bullying and emotional cruelty. Child migrants were viewed more as a stigmatised group or cheap labour than vulnerable children in need of care and protection.
- 12.11 For decades, the Trust has provided former child migrants with specialist counselling to address serious historical abuse and has taken over a hundred victim impact statements detailing appalling accounts of criminal abuse. These matters have been extensively investigated by the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, in particular through Case Study 11, 2014 (Congregation of Christian Brothers in Western Australia response to child sexual abuse at Castledare Junior Orphanage, St. Vincent's Orphanage Clontarf, St. Mary's Agricultural School Tardun and Bindoon Farm School).
- 12.12 Despite the high levels of serious criminal assaults, the conviction rate of perpetrators is very low. CMT is aware of only one perpetrator who received a custodial sentence in the early 1990s, for assaults against former child migrants. Legal actions have failed over the years to deliver justice. Former child migrants frequently express great frustration that while perpetrators walk free, they feel sentenced to a lifetime of suffering.
- 12.13 The December 2017 release of the final report of the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse resulted in law reform initiatives across many States in Australia, removing time limitation obstacles that prevented litigation. There are significant variations from State to State and in general, time limitations have been removed only in relation to historical sexual abuse rather than all forms of historical child abuse.
- 12.14 For those former child migrants who have endured the burden of shocking childhood institutional abuse for decades, the recent acknowledgement and redress options have come very late in the day. Indeed, too late for far too many.
- 12.15 There is also the bitter reality that the majority of perpetrators have eluded justice and ultimately died without being held to account. However, a growing awareness of the long-term impact of historical abuse and changing attitudes have encouraged many former child migrants to seek support to hold the governments, churches and charitable institutions to account for the original abuse and for the failure to acknowledge past crimes for so many years.

- 12.16 Some former child migrants from Scotland describe being scapegoated and bullied for their accent and origins, particularly by English nuns - just as English children often reported suffering discrimination by Irish staff. The children frequently remained attached to friends from their original institution. Those relationships continue today, and for many are a very important connection to their homeland. However, child migrants usually report they avoid discussing historical abuse in any detail with others whom they suspect may have suffered similar experiences, and this is often a complicated strand of their relationship.
- 12.17 Most former child migrants left the Australian institutions aged fifteen, when the subsidies from the Australian and British Government ceased. This was a stressful time as they were sent out to work with little warning or preparation as domestic or farm labourers, often in remote rural locations with few comforts. Low wages only covered their board and lodging, leaving them vulnerable and effectively captive. Many ran away and found themselves homeless.
- 12.18 The loss of relationships with other child migrants is often described as devastating, given these were their primary attachments. After care arrangements were usually inadequate or non-existent. Some children were exploited and abused by their new employers. Many child migrants often felt more alone and vulnerable at that point than at any time in their lives. For those with limited literacy skills, their isolation was a significant risk factor.
- 12.19 The lack of any personal documentation or proof of identity was also a major obstacle to pursuing better paid work. This issue has limited the choices of many former child migrants throughout their adult lives with an adverse impact on their self-esteem and confidence.

13. The impact of separation and trauma

- 13.1 The impact of loss of family and the trauma of institutional abuse for child migrants has been catastrophic. Our language struggles to reflect the full extent of the trauma and degradation endured by the children. Terms like 'abuse' are simply inadequate.
- 13.2 Institutional isolation and lack of outside contact seemed to intensify the severity of assault and trauma suffered by the children. Practices such as allocating the children with numbers rather than using their names contributed to the erosion and denial of personal identity.
- 13.3 Harsh, punishing regimes of physical labour, instead of education, and a culture of violence and depravity gave consistent messages of low personal worth and an absence of warmth or safety. The children lived in constant fear and hunger, often in extremes of weather and in primitive conditions. In Western Australia, Catholic boys helped to build their own institutions.
- 13.4 The severity and depravity of the abuse suffered by many hundreds of British children is well documented through the work of several historical abuse inquiries in the UK and Australia.
- 13.5 CMT asserts the abuse was even more damaging as a consequence of the children's isolation, and particularly their loss of family and personal identity. Some describe the constant fear that one day they would simply disappear.

'I thought, if I stand up to them, what's to stop them killing me and burying me in the bush? Nobody would know. Nobody would even miss me.'

13.6 There are many examples of absolute survival and resilience, former child migrants who endured the unspeakable and today discuss their history with guarded candour and humour. Not unlike survivors of other painful ordeals, there is an exclusive bond with those who shared the experience.

13.7 The long-term damage was profound, summarised here by a child migrant for an earlier Inquiry:

'I have been left with chronic anxiety and a lot of anger. My wife will tell you I have no idea how to relate to people or just be relaxed in company. I am very wary of men, especially loud, confident men. I had no idea how to parent my children or even how to cuddle and love them. I don't really know what love is; I just try to do right by people but most of the time I feel more like I'm watching than joining in. I feel very ashamed at my lack of education and wish I could have done more for my family.'

13.8 Former child migrants' evidence to the Australian Royal Commission, the Northern Ireland HIA Inquiry and the compelling witness testimony before IICSA in 2017 was shocking beyond words.

13.9 **Child migrants sent from Scotland** are sadly also well represented amongst those who experienced the most profoundly damaging abuse. The following are direct quotes from the victim impact statements of Scottish child migrants:

'It happened to me many times. You had no choice but to go into his shed to get the coal. Sometimes I was ordered to take him his dinner, always alone. There was a big wooden bench in his shed, and he slept on that sometimes. Sometimes, he trapped us girls against that bench and touched us up. I remember him saying – 'Nobody will believe you. The nuns pay me, but they make you work for nothing.' Once he had me cornered with his hands under my pinafore, and I screamed out. He said 'Go on, scream, nobody can hear you and nobody will believe you.'

'I discovered from reading my files that my Aunt in Glasgow had tried for many years to contact me and had written several letters. These were withheld from me by Fairbridge. What a difference that would have made to my life, knowing I had somebody who cared about me.'

'It was a place of violence and fear, always shaking looking over my shoulder. Sister ALQ mocking my Scottish accent, threatened with terrible punishments from God. Not much time spent in school – they told me I was no good at anything and I might as well do something useful, so I was sent to the laundry. By the time I left the convent, my reading and writing was very poor.'

'For the week they spent at Tardun on Retreat, usually in June or July each year, they would pray all day and then come for us at night. Boys were chosen from our dormitory and then taken to the Brothers' room where they were sexually assaulted. They would creep around quietly and then shine their torch in your face, all you could see was a black shape lurking behind the blinding glare, but you knew what was required. I was raped by Brother Bruno Doyle and Brother Angus while they renewed their spiritual vows on Retreat at Tardun. By raped, I mean full anal penetration. Brother Angus got me three years in a row, he would get off the bus from Perth and peer around, looking for me.'

'At Fairbridge they had a punishment called 'Silly Beggars,' devised by a cottage mother – used to punish those who had not completed their chores to her satisfaction. Boys were made to stand in a circle each holding a straight edge piece of 2ft long timber. You had to whack the person on your left who was bent over. When it had gone full circle, you had to turn around and hit whoever had hit you. It had to be a solid whack or you'd have to do it again. I can still hear the cries of some of the boys who only had thin pants on.'

'I was second in the class when I left Scotland but at Bindoon it was more about ducking the sticks, hands, canes and flex cables. Even the nuns would rush out of the dining room looking to whack anyone that was not in the queue or making a noise.'

I left Fairbridge not prepared for life at all, carried the shame and feelings that I was different to other people, that somehow I was just not good enough.'

'I was marched down to the sports ground, bare footed, wearing short pants and a shirt. Frost on the ground. Told to kneel on the cement cricket patch for the duration of the Mass - 45 minutes. Could not move afterwards.'

'Used as a Guinea Pig for trainee dentists, they drilled my back teeth, I've had constant pain.'

'Brother Murphy in the showers removed my towel so he could see my private parts and without warning started punching and kneeing me then lifted me by my ankles and banged me upside down on my head. I was late for the evening meal and Brother Doyle belted me all over again.'

'They had me working in the scullery from 5.30 am to 8 pm.'

'The nuns were angry, brutal women who never spoke softly to us, they just shouted at us and called us derogatory names and flogged us constantly with leather belts or wooden canes. Sister ^{ALQ} would box me across the ears and bash me on the side of the head. I have poor hearing in my left ear as a result.'

'Mrs ^{MIO} the cottage mother was an appalling bully who used a cut off, 3-foot length of black rubber hose pipe to administer beltings whenever the mood took her. She would grab me by the hair or by one arm whilst she flogged me all over my body causing welts, bruises, pain and humiliation. We were all made to have a freezing shower in the morning. Mrs ^{MIO} would personally supervise us, naked in the showers. We were well past puberty and I always felt that she was leering.'

'Constant name calling, told you are no good for anything, you'll burn in hell. I got no education, was belted with a ruler, sent to the back of the class and made to wear the 'dunce cap'. Then they put me to work with the elderly women in the hostel – I was exposed to poor old ladies suffering from dementia. My work was to clean their soiled beds, wash them and feed them. It was degrading heavy work for a 12-year-old. I had to lay out a dead body too.'

'At Clontarf, Brother Higgins used psychological abuse as part of his punishment. He caught me one day by the loquat trees and asked me to empty out my pockets. I had 94 loquats in total. He told me that it would take some time before he thought of an appropriate punishment. This caused a lot of stress in me. Finally, two weeks later, he decided that I was to have 94 freezing showers.'

'When I was fifteen, nearly sixteen years, Brother^{AOC} called me to his room one night and I couldn't take it anymore. I told him if he didn't leave me alone I'd tell the Principal, Brother Ewart. ^{AOC} flew into a rage and grabbed me by the throat. He held me against the wall, choking me, lifted me by the throat until my feet were off the ground. He threatened to kill me, saying: 'Listen to me, you scumbag, there are three boys buried in the cemetery here. If you don't want to be the fourth, you keep your fucking mouth shut.'

- 13.10 The prolonged, psychological damage from such devastating layers of trauma, terror and loss is predictable, tragic and overwhelming. The abuse and deprivation was severe and debilitating. For many, there has been little relief or opportunity for recovery.
- 13.11 Some former child migrants in evidence have made the point that the most severely abused children are no longer here to give their testimony. The high rates of substance misuse and suicide amongst those children severely abused in institutional care was noted by the Australian Royal Commission.
- 13.12 For so many, the vacuum of family and identity was used as a weapon by cruel adult caregivers who told the children they had been abandoned and sent away because they were unwanted and worthless. It is difficult for adults to recover from such a devastating message repeated and reinforced, through cruelty and exploitation, day after day over an entire childhood.
- 13.13 The Trust's social work practice has developed around the common need for almost all former child migrants to establish a more accurate and grounded sense of personal and family identity and history. This provides a firm base, the vital, first step in addressing a range of complex issues arising from child migration.

14. Post-war child migration – early warnings, missed opportunities

- 14.1 There is now clear documentary evidence from the Australian Royal Commission Inquiry into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that at least one of the major institutions involved in child migration was aware of serious abuse over several decades. (Case Study 11 report: Finding 8, Page 5).
- 14.2 It is also clear that government authorities in Canada, Australia and the UK had knowledge of concerns about the conditions in many institutions from at least the 1940's onwards. This knowledge alone should have raised serious questions about the decision to resume the policy of child migration after the end of the Second World War. But the questions become even more searching given the clear evidence and concerns that UK Ministers and senior government officials were confronted with during the late 1940s and 1950s about the treatment of child migrants and the conditions in which they were living.
- 14.3 As a result of the continuation of the policy, large numbers of vulnerable young children were highly likely to be the subject of physical and sexual abuse. Distressing testimony from many former Child Migrants conveys the most dreadful violation of young children, on a scale which is unprecedented and difficult to comprehend.

- 14.4 The official narrative which is frequently presented is that the Government, organisations and others were unaware of the conditions, physical torture and sexual abuse of children. There have also been suggestions that these abuses were caused by a few “rotten apples” rather than being a systemic issue and that, in any case, the “standards of the day” somehow made the abuse more acceptable.
- 14.5 However, even a cursory review of contemporaneous documents demonstrates a succession of clear warning signs of neglect and abuse. Moreover, the shock and abhorrence expressed by contemporary observers makes it clear that the treatment of the child migrants fell far below any acceptable standards, irrespective of time.
- 14.6 The reaction of the UK government appears to have been influenced primarily by a desire to avoid any negative impact on either the relationship with the Australian government or the public image of the institutions involved.
- 14.7 Successive reports made available to the British Government highlight the inadequacy of conditions for the Child Migrants. At the very least, there were weak safeguards which needed to be made much more robust to protect these vulnerable children.
- 14.8 In terms of the details, the transportation of unaccompanied British children to Australia, sanctioned by the UK Government under the Empire Settlement Acts, resumed after the war in 1947. Records list 414 children travelling to Australia between June and December of that year (MH10) However, the UK Government was aware even by this time of a number of historical and contemporaneous concerns relating to the care and treatment of children in the very institutions to which they were now being sent.
- 14.9 In June 1943, the Deputy UK High Commissioner highlighted concerns about Northcote Farm in Victoria, citing “very disturbing statements” from an employee regarding conditions at the Farm, the doubts of the Trustees about the soundness of the scheme, the ill health of children due to poor working practices and a current police investigation into the conduct of the teachers (MH11).
- 14.10 In July 1943, Mr Rogers the duties Master at Fairbridge Farm School, Vancouver, was dismissed following a conviction and imprisonment for ‘Immoral relations’ with Fairbridge boys. Furthermore, the UK Government was aware of a report by Isobel Harvey, Superintendent of Child Welfare that highlighted a range of concerns including a failure by the Principal of not reporting three alleged cases of removal of pregnancy and failing to take immediate action when reports had been made of suspected major moral delinquency. The report also noted concerns regarding a Duties Master who had a reputation for ‘fooling with the girls’ (MH12).
- 14.11 In June 1944, a report by Caroline Kelly: ‘A survey of the Australian Field’ [MH13] adds further concerns about these institutions for child migrants, referencing an ‘unpleasant’ happening between a previous teacher and older girls, who were regarded as ‘delinquent,’ at Northcote Farm, Victoria (pg.25). The report indicates that the School’s Committee was not competent to deal with such children. At Fairbridge, Pinjarra the Principal was considered to lack the necessary qualifications for the role and a “complete overhaul” of the administration was recommended (pg.39). References were also made to ‘disturbing reports’. Ms Kelly notes that ‘whilst many knew of the incidents, they were loathe to act because the welfare of the scheme might well be damaged by adverse publicity with the resultant loss of public interest and financial backing’ (pg.18)

- 14.12 In 1946, the Curtis Committee report made a series of recommendations relating to the care of deprived children in England and Wales giving priority to fostering and small, family Homes rather than large, impersonal institutions.
- 14.13 The Committee heard evidence about the arrangements for selecting children for migration and noted that this opportunity was given only to children of 'fine physique and good mental equipment' (pg.177, para 515). These children were considered by the Committee to be '...precisely the children for whom satisfactory openings could be found in this country'. It concluded that in the current climate, '...this particular method of providing for the deprived child is not one that we specifically wish to see extended' but recognized that a fresh start in a new country may be the foundation of a happy life, for children with an unfortunate background.
- 14.14 However, the Curtis Committee did not fully address the risks inherent in child migration schemes or the probability that child migrants would be sent to the sorts of large, impersonal institutions which the Committee itself regarded as unsuitable for the needs of children in care. Indeed, child migration is only given one short paragraph in the entire report. It therefore added the caveat that if migration were to resume '...The emigration of deprived children should be subject to the condition that the receiving government makes arrangements for their welfare and supervision comparable to those recommended in the report' (MH14).
- 14.15 These recommendations related to affection and personal interest, understanding of the child's defects, care for their future, respect for their personality, regard for their self-esteem, and a share in the common life of a small group of people in a homely environment. It should also be noted that plans were already being made for child migration to resume after the end of the war. The first children were sent to Rhodesia in December, 1946. This suggests that the Committee was not aware of the rapid progress made by agencies involved to resume child migration.
- 14.16 Following the Curtis Committee's report, the Home Office issued a memorandum to Australian authorities, stating that it would need to be assured that an Emigration Home or Society would provide the child migrant with equally good care and opportunities overseas as they would have had in the UK, that the standard of care provided should reflect the provisions of the Education Act 1944, that the agency emigrating a child must retain a continuing responsibility, that staff should be of a high quality with an interest in children and be of sufficient numbers to become involved in the care of children. It also indicated that an assessment should be undertaken of how far the child's relatives 'fully understand the permanent nature of the separation as a consequence of emigration' (MH15, pg.2, 7).
- 14.17 Yet, in 1947, the UK Deputy High Commissioner in Australia, sent a confidential report to the UK Government describing conditions that fell 'much below standard', with 'every indication of poverty', including poor linen, inadequate beds, concerns that ordinary children were mixing with 'defectives' and a lack of female staff to care for very young children. These issues were raised with the Archbishop of Perth and Catholic authorities (MH16).
- 14.18 In June 1947, the same official recommended that no children should be sent to Castledare residential home due to significant concerns of overcrowding (MH17).

- 14.19 In October 1947, a longstanding former employee of Fairbridge Farm Schools, Ms Lucy Cole Hamilton, wrote to the Home Office raising concerns about the resumption of child migration because the 'system at present' was not conducive to the happiness and welfare of a child in a 'great many ways'. Ms Hamilton questioned if there would be any direct supervision or inspection of the children by the British authorities (MH18).
- 14.20 In November 1947, the West Australian Child Welfare Department noted that conditions at Bindoon did not conform to the Child Welfare Act (MH19). A visitation report notes a striking contrast in appearance of new migrant boys to those already resident that was considered "shameful". The office of the UK Commissioner in Australia was made aware of these concerns in January 1948, including references to inadequate classroom facilities and boys employed in building work (MH20, p3). Six months later, a letter from the Under – Secretary to the Secretary for Lands and Immigration reveals concerns that all boys over the age of 14 were not in school but working on the institution without pay and that if the Imperial Government became aware of conditions at Bindoon, the State would be called upon for "more drastic control" [MH7].
- 14.21 In March 1948, The British Federation of Social Workers wrote to The Times newspaper calling for an Independent Inquiry to examine the 'whole system of care for deprived children of British Origin in the Commonwealth' due to concerns regarding the standard of care afforded to child migrants by various sending agencies (MH21). No inquiry was undertaken.
- 14.22 On 13th April 1948 the Lord Chancellor provided assurances in the House of Lords that the Home Office intended to secure that children should not be migrated unless there was 'absolute satisfaction that proper arrangements had been made for the care and upbringing of each child'. (MH22). This proved to be an empty, worthless promise. It is clear from subsequent evidence that little effective action was taken to devise the necessary means – e.g. robust inspection regimes and regulations – to achieve these ends.
- 14.23 On 9th July 1948 an inspection report on Castledare indicated that the standard of care contravened the recommendations of the Curtis Committee and was so deplorable that the Home Office could not possibly have been satisfied that proper arrangements had taken place. Conditions were characterised by '...floors stained under the beds, undoubtedly by urine which had dropped there continually through saturated mattresses'. In several instances, mattresses were in a dreadful state and children were sleeping on verandas with thin blankets providing insufficient warmth. In addition, the children's clothing was a picture of neglect as pyjamas were dirty and damp with urine. The inspectors commented that the children were little more than babies and '81 little migrant boys' resided there. (MH23).
- 14.24 The Children Act 1948 provided a revised legislative framework for protecting vulnerable children. Amongst other things, the Act required the Secretary of State to give his consent for the migration of each child in the care of a Local Authority. However, this provision did not apply to the majority of child migrants, those who were cared for by voluntary organizations. Thus, it would appear that these children were not afforded the same level of scrutiny and protection. Furthermore, The Act also empowered the Secretary of State to make regulations in regard to the migration of children by voluntary organisations, yet these regulations were never made.

- 14.25 In 1949, the Home Office acknowledged in a communication to the Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO) 'the dangers' associated with the emigration of unaccompanied children (MH24) and that some children were migrated without their parents' informed consent or awareness of the final nature of the separation. The Home Office also acknowledged instances where the relatives of children would have offered to care for the child had they known of the intention to migrate the child (MH25 pg3. para11)
- 14.26 In 1949, Dallas Patterson, a former Principal of Fairbridge, Pinjarra wrote to the Home Office expressing his concerns about the risk of sexual abuse of child migrants in Australia, the threat of slavery and stigmatisation and the need to maintain a degree of direct responsibility for these children. He urged the Home Office not to trust any overseas authority in assuming responsibility for British children. Patterson was critical of the Fairbridge Perth Community who viewed children as 'potential cheap labour' (Case II) and spoke of 'philandering conduct towards girls by a committee member,' including the case of a 14-year-old girl who was subjected to the 'most seriously immoral behaviour, over a long time, by the son-in-law of the Chairman's wife' (Case IV). This was the third warning which the Home Office had received regarding Fairbridge, Pinjarra (MH26).
- 14.27 In 1949, 21 child migrants arrived at Fairbridge, Pinjarra without any follow-up inspection by a British official subsequent to the letter from Dallas Paterson (MH27). It is also notable how starkly Mr Patterson's letter contrasted with the comment made at the end of 1946 by the Australian Secretary of the Department of Immigration that '...with such a highly regarded and reputable organisation as the Fairbridge Farm Schools, New South Wales, the supervision which the State Authority will need to carry out will be nominal' (MH28). This complacent view – apparent in many UK and Australian governmental communications of the period - proved to have disastrous repercussions for many child migrants.
- 14.28 In August 1950, the Secretary of State was reported to be 'far from impressed' with Fairbridge, Pinjarra and underlined the ongoing responsibility because the children were British and 'British taxpayers' money was being spent' (MH29).
- 14.29 In 1951-2, John Moss a former member of the Curtis Committee, visited Homes in Australia that were receiving child migrants, at the request of the Home Office while holidaying in Australia. Amongst Moss's criticisms were the inadequacy of records, the sanitary arrangements in some institutions, and the suitability of staff.
- 14.30 Moss also revealed continued and significant concerns regarding the conditions and care the children were receiving at Fairbridge, Pinjarra especially a lack of supervision of the Housemothers which required urgent attention if the children's interests were to be safeguarded (MH30, pg3).
- 14.31 The Moss report also provided clear evidence of the contravention at Nazareth House, Geraldton of the stated British policy dating from 1947 (MH31) that older persons should not reside alongside child migrants (MH32 page 11). Several child migrants have reported experiencing sexual abuse by older male residents at Nazareth House, Geraldton and practices that were wholly inappropriate for children. For example, young girls were made to wash and lay out the corpses of aged, adult males and sit with the body through the night.

- 14.32 At other times, they were made to care for these adults and change their beds, whilst the men were exposing themselves and inappropriately touching them.
- 14.33 In 1954, key Government departments furnished their views to an Interdepartmental Committee within the UK government concerned with the continuation of funding for child migration. During the internal debate, officials in the Commonwealth Relations Office indicated that they felt that the migrating agencies had failed to move with the times and that their methods were outdated (MH33, pt13). They also noted current concerns regarding selection of children and that; 'the current situation may not be viewed favourably by the general public and, if they were more attentive, 'more stringent selection of cases and safeguards for their welfare might be called for' (MH33, pt12). Australian migration officials pressed for the retention of the policy but raised concerns about the quality of children selected and that UK Local Authorities expressed unfavourable views towards child migration (MH34).
- 14.34 The Commonwealth Relations Office suggested that continued financial support to the voluntary societies could only be justified if children were placed under no less favourable conditions than they would receive in England and migration was to the advantage of a child.
- 14.35 The Home Office even questioned whether children still needed to be migrated since - '...the demand for children for adoption in Great Britain exceeds the supply and there would be no difficulty in placing in adoptive homes in this country, any children who need homes and would be suitable for emigration'. Furthermore, there was 'no social or economic pressure for the emigration of children' (MH35). Despite these reservations, child migration continued for more than a decade afterwards.
- 14.36 In January 1956, a Fact-Finding Mission led by John Ross was appointed by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations to 'collect information as to the arrangements and upbringing in Australia of migrant children, by the various voluntary societies concerned with the emigration of children' (MH36). This was designed to review the implications for the government of the impending expiry of the Empire Settlement Act.
- 14.37 The Fact Finding Mission produced an official report and confidential addenda produced by Mr Ross relating to a number of individual institutions. The report represented a high level account of the Mission's findings but the addenda exposed serious concerns about the conditions and treatment of child migrants in several individual institutions.

'...many of the men were in advanced stages of dementia. They would grope at me as I tried to change their beds or expose themselves, leering at me. One old man, when you went near him, he would pull out his genitals and tell me to give his balls a tickle'.

'I was made to work in the old men's home, changing soiled beds, washing old, senile, incontinent men, some of whom would grab my breasts and expose themselves. I also had to lay out dead bodies. This gave me nightmares for years'.

- 14.38 For example, a confidential inspection report of Castledare noted that there were doubts as to whether provision for even the physical welfare of the children could be regarded as adequate (MH37, pg.2). A further report on Bindoon notes that Ross 'found it hard to say anything good about the place' and the 'principal had no idea that the standard of care fell short' (MH38, pg.3).
- 14.39 Children residing at St. Joseph's, Neerkol were considered to be 'pale and listless' and were having an institutional upbringing in 'isolation from the outside world', with children who were extremely vulnerable being cared for by a worker who had 'little understanding of a child's needs' (MH39).
- 14.40 Ross listed five institutions that should not receive any further child migrants: St. Josephs Farm School, Bindoon; Dhurringile; Riverview Salvation Army Training Farm; Methodist Home Magill, and St. John Bosco Boy's Town. To these, the Home Office proposed to add to any "blacklist", St Joseph's Neerkol, as well as Fairbridge, Molong and Pinjarra. It was considered that some of these institutions were 'so wrong in the principles on which they were run, there would need to be a complete metamorphosis' to bring them up to an acceptable standard (MH40).
- 14.41 These concerns were reported to UK ministers and senior government officials in 1956 and resulted in prolonged discussions at senior levels between key departments, including the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Home Office. Amongst other things, these exchanges acknowledged that the UK government was aware that existing legislation was deficient in providing sufficient checks and balances to safeguard migrant children (MH41) and that the welfare of these children was not always of paramount importance in key decision making.
- 14.42 At the time of this debate, there was an application for 16 children awaiting approval to go to Fairbridge, Pinjarra and Molong. Both institutions had been identified as potential candidates for the blacklist, but the conclusion reached after exchanges between the Home Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office was that for 'practical political reasons', 'although well-informed opinion would condemn them from the point of view of the accepted principles of child care' (MH42) the children should be allowed to go to these Homes despite the operation of a 'standstill policy' on approvals while the ramifications of the Ross report were considered.
- 14.43 This was to avoid '...inconvenience as preparations were so far in advance' (MH43) and '...the wrath of the voluntary societies particularly Fairbridge who had the means to make itself heard in both Houses of parliament and the public at large' (MH44).
- 14.44 Whilst these diplomatic exchanges were taking place, a vulnerable child, someone's son or daughter, was very likely to be the subject of physical and sexual abuse.
- 14.45 Subsequently, the government concluded that full exposure of the Ross report would create a public outcry and adverse publicity with the potential to impact upon donations to the churches and charities involved (MH45). This, in turn, might risk undermining the child migration policy itself with consequent implications for the financial burden on the Exchequer of children remaining in UK Homes and relations with the Australian government (MH46, p.4).

- 14.46 This led to a decision, sanctioned at Ministerial level, to delay the publication of the Ross Report until after Parliament had gone into summer recess in 1956 and thus minimise parliamentary and public debate (MH47). The confidential addenda were never published.
- 14.47 Meanwhile, further inspection reports by a UK government observer (Anthony Rouse) in July 1956, noted his shock at conditions at Bindoon and how they were “allowed to continue for so long”, the ‘utterly callous’ nature of one Brother who appeared to be ‘lacking in all understanding of child welfare’ and the ‘indescribably filthy ablutions and shower facilities’.
- 14.48 The observer’s report of Clontarf included clear concerns of physical abuse; ‘Mr McCall said he was hardly on speaking terms with the principal for he had reprimanded him for severely beating one of the boys unnecessarily’ (MH48).
- 14.49 The Fact Finding Mission, and further inspections, provided a clear opportunity for the British Government to decide either to suspend child migration altogether and repatriate the children for their own safety and wellbeing or, at the very least, to ensure that more stringent standards were enforced to protect the children from abuse. This was not done. Instead, voluntary agencies were ‘invited’ to help ensure adequate standards of care through information and advice (MH49), allow observations and provide reports as to their activities and arrangements (MH50).
- 14.50 This “invitation” does not appear to have been taken up with any meaningful consequences and children continued to be abused. The Australian Royal Commission has noted serious sexual abuse at Riverview Training Farm from 1956 onwards and we know of others who were subjected to brutality at, for example, Tardun and Bindoon, where former child migrants who arrived in 1957 have described sexual abuse by multiple perpetrators. In 1958, children were systematically sexually abused at Mowbray Park, Picton, New South Wales. This was reported to the British authorities at the time and yet there were failures to ensure appropriate safeguarding measures were put in place through further inspections (MH51, MH52). In 1960, an internal note between officials at the Commonwealth Relations Office indicates there were no up-to-date reports on how establishments were complying with the principles outlined in the agreements of 1957 or the conditions of the institutions (MH53).
- 14.51 It would seem that a succession of appalling individual incidents, reports of seriously substandard conditions at specific institutions and an accumulation of concerns over several years were not seen as sufficient reason to trigger the measures required to safeguard these vulnerable children.
- 14.52 It is abundantly clear from the accounts given by former child migrants of their shocking childhood experiences that the few steps taken to protect them were a dismal failure. The result was that the children continued to be at risk for many years to come. Moreover, lessons were not learned which might have helped to prevent other children being abused in the following decades.

15. The Role of CMT

- 15.1 The impact of child migration on the adult lives of thousands of children deported from the UK is enduring, deeply entrenched, and for many, has been catastrophic. Hurt and abused children have the potential to grow up into hurt and angry adults, especially if they are not helped to address the most painful and threatening aspects of their abuse. It is now increasingly accepted that the consequences of sustained institutional childhood abuse are likely to require lifelong specialist, trauma informed professional services, either at times of crisis or on a more consistent basis.
- 15.2 CMT services are provided by professionally qualified social workers experienced in counselling related to identity, loss and recovery from historical institutional abuse. Expertise in counselling models including trauma-informed practice - given the high incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder in the former Child Migrant community - provides an appropriate framework for a specialist service. CMT staff employ relevant theoretical models in their practice for assessment and intervention, including theories of attachment, loss and mourning, children's development and family systems.
- 15.3 Adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse consistently speak of pervasive feelings of intense fear and shame which often leave them isolated with major difficulties of trust and an overwhelming sense of pessimism and despair. A key therapeutic approach to reframe these emotions and assumptions can be drawn from child development theory to help them understand the powerlessness of a child under the control of adult perpetrators, upon whom they are totally dependent.
- 15.4 General counselling services are unlikely to have knowledge of child migration, access to their records or the capacity to trace and engage families in preparation for reunion work. Expertise in counselling models including trauma-informed practice is vital given the high incidence of PTSD across the client population. The impact of ageing on this group of people is heightening their need for access to specialist help.
- 15.5 CMT offers a warm welcome in a homely setting as an antidote to a childhood spent in a cold, harsh institution. Considerable attempts are made to provide the exact opposite of their childhood experiences. The service is planned to be explicitly safe for people who have experienced childhood trauma and designed to avoid obvious and subtle triggers which might raise anxiety and thus reduce opportunities for recovery.
- 15.6 CMT observes the fundamental principle that direct client work with adult survivors of childhood abuse requires both trust and safety. The lack of individual attention, alongside a gross betrayal of trust by adults who were responsible for their daily care, is a universal feature of former Child Migrants' institutional experience. The principles of 'trauma-informed' services strongly apply to former child migrants, many of whom experienced prolonged institutional abuse and crushing isolation and fear throughout their childhood.
- 15.7 Instead of the denial or denigration of their specific individual and family identity, former Child Migrants are enabled to discover more about their family and reunite with them in a planned and meaningful way. Rather than being treated as a category or a group, former Child Migrants are offered an individualised service - not in a standard office, but in a house with soft furnishings which convey a culture of respect for child migrants and their families.

- 15.8 Clients of the service participate in the presentation of the premises, to provide a sense of ownership. For example, the roses in the front garden of the Perth office were chosen and planted by former Child Migrants who also painted the sign outside the front door.
- 15.9 CMT offers a multi-stranded range of services, apart from counselling, which permits former Child Migrants to decide when or whether to disclose episodes of childhood sexual abuse. The initial contact often results from the urgent desperation to find family and identity, or to resolve residency or citizenship matters.
- 15.10 Many develop a trusting relationship with a social worker exploring their family research. The search for family is fundamental. For many clients, it becomes almost impossible to separate the experience of abuse from the overall experience of deprivation and loneliness. A distressed child can often become an anguished adult if left to cope with distressing memories on their own.
- 15.11 This gradual, step by step approach may be especially significant for those for whom childhood sexual abuse has damaged their sense of self. Trusting others is a very real challenge for many, especially regarding those in positions of authority. In addition to therapeutic services related to restoration of family and identity, or preparation of statements of institutional historical abuse, CMT offers clients opportunities to participate in group work discussions on a range of relevant issues.
- 15.12 Former Child Migrants are encouraged to take full advantage of new developments in their search for family and identity, especially the Family Restoration Fund, managed by CMT, which provides resources to facilitate overseas reunion travel. This has been available since the UK apology in 2010 and has supported over 1,250 reunion visits.
- 15.13 In the case of the largest surviving group of former Child Migrants, those sent in the post-war era to Australia, many assumed incorrectly that having lived there for over forty years they were Australian citizens. Others were confused by complex regulations or lacked the necessary documents to confirm or alter their citizenship status. The Trust has been active in helping many former Child Migrants to clarify their status, make informed choices and implement their decisions on this important issue
- 15.14 The Child Migrants Trust has a unique role in Australia regarding citizenship issues for former Child Migrants. The Trust's advocacy has led to reforms so that former Child Migrants sent to Australia in the post-war period no longer have to pay a fee to obtain Citizenship. The Department of Immigration has established a protocol with the Trust to enable all former Child Migrants to benefit from this concession.
- 15.15 CMT works closely with the International Association of former Child Migrants and their Families (IAFCM&F), hosting joint events, consulting to ensure that services are relevant and working together on matters of policy and campaigning.
- 15.16 Participation in media, cultural and campaigning activities to promote their own justice agenda, has been identified by clients as an important strand of their recovery. CMT encourages former Child Migrants to challenge common myths, for example that they were war orphans, as a way of taking control of their own history and legacy.

- 15.17 Since the 1990s, CMT has assisted former Child Migrants with the stressful task of participating in official historical abuse Inquiries, where giving evidence in person often powerfully confronts the feeling that the past is the present. Inquiries so far include the UK Health Select Committee, the Australian Senate, the Northern Ireland HIA, the Australian Royal Commission and IICSA. Testimony can be painful for those receiving it, just as it is for the person giving it.
- 15.18 The benefits of restoring family relationships and a sense of belonging are frequently mentioned by former Child Migrants as making the greatest positive difference to their adult lives. For some, it is transformative and helps them face more painful issues relating to historical abuse.
- 15.19 We cannot give back to child migrants their lost childhood but with determination, compassion and commitment, we can help them move from confusion and despair to clarity and a better understanding of their own family history.

16. CMT Service Principles – Independence and Safety

- 16.1 Independence from those agencies involved in child migration, which also have association with perpetrators of abuse or oppressive practice, is a fundamental service principle. This is a vital issue for people abused in institutional care, relating to the past abuse of power which can easily emerge in current relationships with organisations and authorities.
- 16.2 Independence provides therapeutic safety and helps develop trust and confidence. Its importance as a key value has been accepted by the Australian Government, evidenced by the insistence on ‘arms-length’ distance from past care provider agencies in their funding contracts for services.
- 16.3 Many former Child Migrants report feeling diminished by contact with their past abusers. The dynamic of powerlessness can easily be triggered and they may feel intimidated or unable to assert their wishes. CMT underlines the importance of confidentiality to secure an environment of safety to help them to develop trusting, therapeutic relationships. This is particularly important for those living with residual issues, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
- 16.4 We have developed more understanding of the impact and implications of PTSD. It is more than just flashbacks and sleepless nights. I think there is a difference from somebody coming back from a war zone with PTSD. We can see that and relate to it. For somebody to experience very severe symptoms, living with triggers and fears from a very young age, it becomes embedded into their psyches, and remains a threat that can re-emerge in times of stress.
- 16.5 A crucial factor in supporting successful reunions is the issue of independence. Independence from past deceptive, coercive practices and no association with past residential care and historical institutional abuse. Issues of trust and independence are vital in developing a professional relationship to support families to reunite with a missing child migrant relative.

- 16.6 Any agency previously involved in the deception of parents should not be engaged in the delicate, sensitive task of restoring a family separated for decades. These issues are developed in the sections on independence and secondary abuse.
- 16.7 CMT does not use volunteers to provide any aspect of its direct services. Whilst there is pressure to meet the demands, we consider the issues facing former child migrants require a professional and accountable approach that may be difficult to maintain with volunteers.

17. Importance of Independence – further examples of flawed practice

- 17.1 From its inception, CMT recognised the vital need for independence in the provision of therapeutic services, given that some former child migrants have lost trust in government agencies or those organisations in whose care they were abused, exploited and neglected. There appears to be a fundamental and persistent flaw in the reasoning of migrating agencies between having a responsibility to address past poor practices and the funding and provision of those services.
- 17.2 CMT agrees former child migrants require a choice in the service they need to help restore personal and family identity, or to address issues of historical childhood abuse. However, this should be an informed choice with full appreciation and disclosure of the potential risks of secondary abuse involved both for former child migrants and their families.
- 17.3 There appears to be continuing resistance to the fundamental practice principle that recovery for survivors of historical abuse requires independent therapeutic services that promote trust and safety. Service provision needs to be separate from agencies which employed so many perpetrators who abused their power and control over vulnerable children in a foreign country, with neither family nor friends to protect them.
- 17.4 Failure to recognise the need for independence where there is a past history of institutional abuse and deceptive practices is probably the most enduring form of secondary abuse. It has led to compromised or failed family reunions and sometimes a reinforcement of a pervasive sense of abandonment and rejection. Yet, sometimes, it is the agencies that families are not prepared to accept, rather than their child migrant relatives.
- 17.5 Whilst some voluntary organisations do recognise the importance of independence in matters of historical abuse, the Trust's view is that legislation is necessary to enshrine the unarguable right of individuals to choose independently provided services. This will assist in reducing the risk of further damage and lost opportunities through secondary abuse.
- 17.6 I would also like to draw the Inquiry's attention to the recommendations of the Northern Ireland Inquiry, whose Report recommended the created of a post called the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse. Paragraph 16 of the Report states that "*The Commissioner (who should be assisted by the necessary staff) should be entirely independent of government and the organisations that ran the institutions, but should be funded by the government.*" This conclusion underlines the need for independent support.
- 17.7 CMT's solid foundation of independence is a vital component of ensuring safety and confidence for people who, as children, have experienced abuse and deceptive, coercive practices from voluntary agencies and government authorities. The Trust views independence as a key value and places the rights and needs of former child migrants and their families at the heart of its work.

- 17.8 Investigating former child migrants' family backgrounds usually uncovers a trail of past practice by faith based or secular agencies that lacked a child or family focus. Interviews with child migrants' parents over the years provide many examples of coercive, stigmatising or dishonest cultures within UK residential care providers during the 1940s and 50s.
- 17.9 Given the high levels of historical institutional abuse and dismissive, negligent attitudes in relation to aftercare provision by many agencies, it is clear that services working to restore family life and promote recovery from childhood abuse need to be independent from any association with past agencies and poor, oppressive practices.
- 17.10 These observations are neither surprising nor particularly radical. We would expect professional service providers to sign up to the concept that therapeutic safety depends upon independence and transparency. Independence is a foundation stone of safe services.
- 17.11 Unfortunately, many agencies with a history of involvement in child migration ignore the need for independence and offer services to those people who have been subjected to unfathomable suffering and loss due to their past, low standards which tolerated criminal abuse. Although agencies assume they are equipped to do this work, this claim cannot withstand close scrutiny. If one former child migrant misses the opportunity to meet their mother because she is unwilling to work with an agency that treated her with disrespect and abusive practice in the past, that should be sufficient to convince those agencies to refer the work to an independent organisation. Not to do so constitutes secondary abuse. The Trust has always consistently held this position.
- 17.12 Regardless of the migrating agencies' motivation for continuing involvement, whether based on self-interest to avoid exposure of poor past practices or a genuine wish to make amends, it is not a structurally sound approach. It does not give priority to the needs of former child migrants.
- 17.13 The Trust has encountered many examples of poor practice by the migrating agencies, their successors and funded agents over the years.
- 17.14 For example: a former child migrant from Western Australia asked a Catholic agency to help him find and reunite with his mother. The work was referred to an agency in Northern Ireland. His mother was found and visited by two nuns. The child migrant was then taken to his mother by the same nuns, who remained present in the room during this first meeting between mother and son in over 60 years.
- 17.15 In the child migrant's own words: *'My poor mother just stared at the floor and patted the cat. The nuns wouldn't leave the room or let us talk in private. The nuns encouraged her to speak but she wouldn't look at me or at them. It was horribly tense and I felt she had been bullied into meeting me. Later, we developed a kind of formal, polite relationship but it was hardly the warm, embracing reunion I'd longed for all my life.'*
- 17.16 It is possible that the child migrant's mother might have responded differently had she been approached by independent, skilled professionals. Perhaps she may have felt more at ease or more confident to speak openly about the loss of her child decades earlier and taken a more active role in planning her own reunion. The Trust believes that positive reunions and enduring relationships are more likely where families are actively involved in managing their reunion at an early stage. The Trust's role is to guide and facilitate rather than take centre stage or intrude upon a family's privacy.

- 17.17 Similarly, CMT was working with a group of brothers and sisters who were sent to Australia in the 1950s and approached a faith based agency to retrieve records to assist the family research. Rather than passing information to the Trust, that agency located the family and began working with some members, creating difficulties for CMT to engage the family as a whole and coordinate their eventual reunion.
- 17.18 In this case, past poor practice with the children's mother who had been incarcerated in an institution in her later life was rationalised and defended, rather than confronted with a focus on her rights. The agency reinforced the narrative that it was the mother's fault the children became separated and lost to one another.
- 17.19 The eventual reunion experience was compromised and fragmented, through the lack of a joined-up approach and freedom from the migrating agency's interests to preserve its own reputation.
- 17.20 **The failure of today's agencies to embrace independent practice suggests that a reliance on ethical guidelines is not an effective policy. The Trust's view is that legislation is needed prohibiting social work agencies from providing therapeutic services to individuals and families where there has been past involvement in historical abuse of children and coercive practices.** This measure will assist in preventing further damage and lost opportunities through secondary abuse.

18. Secondary Abuse

- 18.1 CMT has developed the term 'secondary abuse' to describe poor contemporary practices that further compound the original harm done to the former child migrants by those agencies that either held statutory responsibility for them or were 'past care providers'. The concept explicitly relates to the continuing negative impact of the historical power imbalance between former Child Migrants and the institutions in whose care they were abused as children.
- 18.2 One concept of secondary abuse refers to adults abused as children going on to harm others as a result of their own damaging experiences. In our context, CMT considers secondary abuse to be practices and attitudes that further compound the harm arising from the original abuse. In everyday terms, it results in adding insult to injury. Often the issue relates to continuing abuse of power, such as breaches of confidentiality, withholding or placing obstacles to records access, that trigger past dynamics of powerlessness for former child migrants.
- 18.3 CMT has encountered many examples of institutions compounding the original harm arising from historical abuse by their present day attitudes and practices. These range from subtle undermining through continued institutional attitudes and processes, to more serious breaches including denial of historical abuse, inappropriate use of authority and failure to observe confidentiality. A simple but common example is the refusal of agencies to divulge information which would enable former Child Migrants to find their parents, which prolongs unnecessary separation. In the worst cases, parents die before they can be traced. Such cruel practices all carry the potential for re-traumatisation.

- 18.4 The following excerpt from a Scottish child migrant's statement reflects the institutions' disregard for individual children's needs and how their past abuse of power means they should have no involvement with current reunion work. In CMT's work with former child migrants over decades the following example is not uncommon:
- 'I did get back to Scotland in 1982 and learnt my Father had tried to get me back, in 1958, but was told I was a ward of the State of Victoria and he would have to go to court to get me back. My Father's brother who was in the merchant navy went up to Nazareth in 1959 when his ship was in Melbourne. He wanted to see me and was told I no longer belonged to his family. I spoke to Uncle [REDACTED] myself (many years later) and he told me they, the Nuns were quite rude to him and under no circumstances would they let him see me. My Aunt, Dad's sister asked me why I never wrote to thank her for the gifts she sent. My other Aunt said the same. Problem was, I never received them nor the birthday cards they sent either.'*
- 18.5 Continued denial of historical abuse by governments and past residential care providers until recent times has compounded the damage, often to the extent of minimising human rights violations or placing the blame with survivors of abuse themselves. Rather than accepting there was a culture of abuse within the institutions and a culture of neglect across government authorities charged with monitoring standards and safeguarding, a more typical response has been to deny the issue, blame the victim or suggest problems were caused by 'a few rotten apples.'
- 18.6 When apologies have been offered, these have sometimes been received as inadequate, overly delayed, and presented conditionally without accepting full responsibility. Many former child migrants report there has been a failure to offer meaningful accountability that goes beyond words and rhetoric, as confirmed in evidence by IICSA witness [REDACTED]:
- "Living with the injustice of perpetrators who always got away with it still makes me burn with anger. Modest pay offs from redress schemes make me sometimes feel like I've sold out, because nobody has ever been held to account and it feels like I am silenced... the organisations and governments who made the policy need to be held to account for what happened to me". (IICSA Public Hearing Transcript, [REDACTED] 2017, [REDACTED])*
- 18.7 Most examples of recent secondary abuse known to the Trust arise from the continuing abuse of the historical power imbalance between the agencies and former child migrants as children under their control.
- 18.8 One clear and recent example relates to a man in his 70s who experienced appalling, sustained sexual assaults from the age of seven within WA institutions. In 2016, he reluctantly participated in a 'behind-closed-doors' internal settlement process set up by a religious Order, in the absence of any other redress option. He wrote the following to me: *'You know I never, ever want to have any contact with them after the terrible abuse I suffered as a little boy. I was promised by my lawyer I wouldn't have to see them. But when I got there, an elderly man came out of the room crying and I saw the Brothers were there. I became extremely agitated and upset.'*
- 18.9 After protracted negotiating over the cash value of his childhood abuse and lifetime of trauma, he became so distressed with the continued bartering that he ended the meeting and left without a resolution. That night he had severe chest pains and next day was admitted to hospital with a heart attack. He remained in hospital for a week.

- 18.10 Whilst in hospital he was contacted several times with varying offers to conclude the settlement conference. On discharge, he was telephoned in the car on the way home from hospital and, at that point, accepted the offer to end the process which lacked any form of justice or referral to the police. He later said: *'To this day, I regret doing it. I feel like I sold my soul to the Devil.'*
- 18.11 The majority of former child migrants abused as children within institutional care suffer from long term complications arising from post-traumatic stress disorder. For many, the institutional perpetrators remain a potential trigger for continuing distress and trauma. Recovery through therapeutic services requires safety and trust. For most people, that will require distance from any connection with the perpetrator, their affiliated institution or successor agency. It requires therapeutic independence, the assurance that there are no vested interests to defend the perpetrators or their reputation. One does not usually return to the perpetrator of criminal abuse for counselling and support, though you may wish to pursue justice and accountability.
- 18.12 CMT has frequently heard complaints from child migrants about contemporary interactions with the institutions that were distressing, sometimes to the point of triggering their childhood trauma. The common themes are powerlessness, disrespect and indifference or denial.
- 18.13 The impact of secondary abuse can include:
- Re-activating trauma related to past authoritarian, exploitative or abusive relationships;
 - Reinforcing a sense of powerlessness and despair;
 - Triggering feelings of rage that cannot be contained or safely expressed. These feelings often bleed into other interpersonal relationships with partners and children;
 - Preventing or delaying former child migrants from seeking help, and ultimately losing the opportunity for recovery
- 18.14 CMT has evidence of failed family reunions where lack of independence or poorly informed practice that takes no account of the agency's historical abuse of power has led to further devastating outcomes (secondary abuse). Some mothers, for example, have rejected approaches from staff directly involved with the agencies who removed their child, given their painful memories and unresolved feelings.
- 18.15 The fear of rejection is a constant anxiety for many former Child Migrants. Family reunion work is a highly specialist area of work. We recommend strongly that this requires independence from those agencies who separated the children from their parents and did such terrible damage to their self-esteem and sense of identity. A Scottish child migrant recently recalled how she could never forget the harsh words spoken to her repeatedly as a vulnerable young girl: *'Your mother never wanted you, you were dumped outside Nazareth House in wet nappies. She didn't want you, we don't want you either.'*
- 18.16 We all have a shared responsibility to ensure we make sound, ethical decisions on these vital issues of identity and family relationships. Child migrants and their families have had the odds stacked against them for decades. They need to be centre stage in efforts to rebuild family lives that were severed with such brutal indifference. This is where hope and recovery exists for many former Child Migrants.

19. Access to records

- 19.1 Records of personal and family identity are critical for a range of issues at key stages in every individual's life cycle. A birth certificate is needed for citizenship and marriage and to obtain a passport, driving licence and pension. It is a practical necessity. It is also the starting point for tracing family and restoring family relationships.
- 19.2 Issues relating to accessing historical records have been flashpoints for many former child migrants over the years. CMT has consistently raised the importance of records for former child migrants.
- 19.3 In its early days, CMT encountered a resistant attitude from both government and child care agencies in relation to the identification and retrieval of records. Most agencies appeared to have little idea of what they held or any straightforward way to access it. There were also rigid and outdated notions of ownership which, at times, led to a response that former child migrants had no right to their own information and records.
- 19.4 Information was sometimes provided in a minimalist and grudging manner, yet this was a critical issue for those living overseas who had been subjected to enormous loss and disadvantage through government policy and church practice. The records were often the key to a search for family and the development of a truthful narrative about their family background.
- 19.5 Today there are working protocols in place for the retrieval of former child migrant's documentation. Most agencies have re-organised their internal records and are more accepting of their continuing responsibilities towards former residents in terms of records.
- 19.6 The Trust's submission in 1998 to the House of Commons Health Select Committee inquiry into the welfare of former child migrants stated as follows:
- A key dimension of the Trust's philosophy is that former Child Migrants should enjoy equality of opportunity in terms of their knowledge of both themselves and their family background. Unlike the majority of the population, who take these issues for granted, many former Child Migrants have never had a full birth certificate and do not know where they were born or even whether their parents are alive or dead. It is clearly essential that former Child Migrants have access to this type of information as soon as possible.*
- 19.7 The failure to provide the children with basic records and information has had an adverse impact on the most basic transactions in adult life, such as obtaining a passport. Many former child migrants report tortuously complex attempts to navigate the world of government systems without basic documents of identity. This is particularly difficult in today's climate of heightened awareness of identity and security requirements and is often the pathway of new referrals to CMT. This deprivation of identity and personal records is an abuse of basic human rights, common to all child migrants across the four receiving countries.
- 19.8 Lack of access to records has left many former child migrants with residual problems arising from deceptive and cruel treatment by those responsible for their care. Child migrants often report they never celebrated birthdays in the institutions, and sometimes did not know how old they were. Even within an institutional context of little attention being given to children as individuals, this was appalling neglect.

- 19.9 Many former child migrants have been helped by the Trust to discover their identity and the fundamentals of identity - their correct names, date of birth and where they were born. For example, a former child migrant sent to Tardun in Western Australia told the Trust: *'One day, I asked Brother X: 'When is my birthday?' He stood in front of me and said: 'Your name is [REDACTED] and your birthday is [REDACTED]'* That child migrant lived for the next 40 years until CMT provided his birth certificate, believing [REDACTED] was his birthday because he'd been told a flippant untruth in response to a question any child should be able to ask.
- 19.10 The importance of historical records for a child's identity is closely linked to the prevailing need and hope of many former Child Migrants to be reunited with their families. This was recognized by the Health Select Committee which recommended:
- Former child migrants, their descendants or nominated representatives should have immediate access to all files containing information concerning their history and background. They should be advised to seek preparatory counselling before receiving sensitive items.*
- 19.11 There has been since the 1990s a general acceptance across professional agencies that historical care records should be given in a supported way rather than merely handing over a file that may contain harsh, judgmental or distressing information. Most agencies have re-organised their internal record systems and accept their responsibility to provide information to former residents. However, there have been many examples of poor practice and secondary abuse over the years. For example:
- The custodian of records at Fairbridge, a former cottage mother, was reported to have aggressively told a former child migrant *'Why do you want your records? You should be grateful for all Fairbridge has done for you. There's nothing but misery in your past.'*
 - CMT retrieved a file from a Western Australian agency which included a letter written by the former child migrant asking for help to trace his mother. Hand written across the bottom of the letter were the words: *'say parents died while a baby.'* This was not true.
 - Former child migrants have frequently reported being told over the years there are no surviving records, everything was burnt or destroyed in the London blitz. This is rarely true, particularly since most child migrants were sent away after the end of the war. One was told by a representative of the migrating institution that his birth certificate was *'washed overboard in a shipping container accident'*
- 19.12 When records are provided, there can be issues arising from modern public relations practices that promote the agency itself, rather than simply responding to the child migrant who requests their file and existing information about their parents and childhood. Sometimes the files arrive bound up with elaborate written material that promotes the agency's history alongside its current services. Critical family information is often redacted, whilst information about the institution, its founder, fundraising activities and forms for donations and bequests, are included.
- 19.13 **In relation to former child migrants from Scotland**, few if any of the children known to CMT from Catholic agencies maintained records with detailed information regarding their family background or the circumstances of their separation from parents. In recent years, the Sisters' of Nazareth have sought to improve their record keeping practices and employed an archivist to assist inquiries for historical child care records.

- 19.14 However, the reality is their past practices were woefully inadequate and little information is generally available. There are three main areas of difficulty – the destruction of records, the lack of foresight to collect vital information in the first place and a failure to appreciate the significance of records for former child migrants.
- 19.15 In most cases, it is only extracts from various registers that is available by the Sisters of Nazareth, limited to the date of admission, child's date of birth, sacramental information and the date of discharge to Australia. It is rare for a family search to be resolved on the basis of such limited information. Consequently, a search for family might continue for years, particularly where the surname is not distinctive and there is no information regarding a mother's place of residence.
- 19.16 Former child migrants sent from Quarriers have sometimes been more fortunate as the standard of record keeping was generally superior to faith-based agencies. Historical files sometimes include detailed admission records and information regarding family structure which could help the search for family members still living today.

20. Family tracing experiences – need for CMT services

- 20.1 Without basic personal identity information, the search for family is akin to looking for a needle in a haystack. 12,000 miles from home, and before the internet, some child migrants ordered birth certificates and accepted whatever arrived as their own birth record, resulting in costly searches for the wrong families.
- 20.2 For example, in 2005, CMT reunited a former child migrant with his mother in Canada. Twenty years earlier, his own research led him to purchase a death certificate for a woman of the same name, leading him on a false trail and the firm belief she had died. Had he not approached the Trust regarding an unrelated matter, and an offer made to review his research, mother and son would probably never have met.
- 20.3 Prior to the establishment of the Trust, former child migrants had no reliable route to establish their identity and rebuild relationships with families. They relied upon the good will of individuals in government and other agencies in the absence of any policy or informed understanding of past practices and the need for child migrants to receive specialist help.
- 20.4 In the late 1980s and 90s, many former child migrants' parents were still alive and there was still an opportunity to rebuild family life, despite the distance and passage of time. Today, there are very few parents living. It is left to the next generation to try to make sense of the past and welcome home their former child migrant relatives. Attitudes and practices of both charities and faith-based agencies regarding requests for historical records from former child migrants were often disrespectful and dismissive prior to the establishment of CMT.
- 20.5 The obstacles to former child migrants achieving a successful reunion with their families are numerous and complex. To begin with, most were given false and often hurtful misinformation about their family background. Many believed the lie that they were orphans, and so did not try to search for families until it was already too late. Others were wrongly told their mothers abandoned them at birth or were prostitutes.

- 20.6 Often, they were told to be grateful they had been ‘saved’ from terrible families; that there was nothing for them back in the UK. For many, the impact of such hurtful lies led to painful feelings and a sense of abandonment. These often impacted on their future relationships and left them ill equipped for the complex dynamics of managing a reunion with their family after decades of separation and a distorted sense of history.
- 20.7 Over the years, many mothers interviewed by the Trust gave accounts of desperate efforts to reclaim their children from institutional care, only to be told they were ‘happily settled with new families and should not be disrupted.’ One was even told that her son had died when, in fact, he had been deported to Australia. Some left information with the agencies in readiness for a future when their child may come searching for them.
- 20.8 For example, a Belfast mother whose son was migrated from a London institution returned to collect him after she married at the end of the war. It is not known what she was told about his whereabouts, but certainly she did not sign his migration consent. Although she left her United States contact details for him, that information was never given to her son who returned to the UK Catholic agency to search for his family in the 1960s, when he was 25 years old. She died before they could meet, though the son was reunited with his step-father, who had always known about his wife’s missing child.
- 20.9 Practical barriers of living half a world away from home, with limited access to detailed, factual information, creates significant difficulties for most child migrants seeking to find their families without professional help.
- 20.10 Similarly, for families of former child migrants, there are many complex and sensitive issues that require skilled intervention to overcome. Families were often wrongly told their child had been adopted, meaning that, until recent years, a search was not possible.
- 20.11 Where parents have died, their later born children usually have no knowledge of their child migrant relative and little understanding of their parents’ early life and family history to appreciate how a child could have become lost from the family. News that they have a brother or sister they have never known is understandably a great shock, particularly if a parent is no longer alive to help them make sense of this revelation.
- 20.12 Family restoration work requires specialist, professional skills and knowledge to conduct meaningful, healing reunions with the potential for sustainable, accepting relationships.
- 20.13 The Trust provides therapeutic support for family members as well as former child migrants. Attention to detail and the capacity to address the needs and expectations of all involved in the reunion are vital ingredients in achieving positive outcomes. Similarly, post reunion debriefing and support helps to reinforce and encourage newly developing and much longed for family relationships.

21. Research complexities

- 21.1 CMT views family research as a specialist area of practice. It is driven by the same values and ethics that protect privacy and acknowledge the long-term legacy of a family’s complex past, whilst exploring the potential for restoring relationships for the future.

- 21.2 Family research in the context of a desperate search for family is not a task for volunteers, nor an activity that can usually be delegated to local historians who may not feel bound by confidentiality where there is a good local story. It can be seductive to chat with village historians who know everyone, and all their business, but feel no hesitation in sharing scandalous theories. It is unlikely a positive and respectful outcome would develop from that route. Equally, CMT would not refer this work to agencies who may have previously played a part in the breakdown of family relationships through oppressive or deceptive practices.
- 21.3 Beyond the practical issues, there are several complexities relating to the passage of time and the sensitivities and privacy of family life. Great tact and attention to questions of confidentiality are required to avoid finding a family but alienating them in the process, leaving them feeling exposed and vulnerable. The Trust's independence and emphasis on confidentiality are strong factors in the agency's success over many years.
- 21.4 In CMT's experience, a mother who lost her child sixty years ago will rarely have spoken with later born children or with friends about a painful period of her life that remains locked into complex grief. Great care is needed to avoid feelings of vulnerability or exposure which may prevent any possibility of a healing reunion. Being identified through a grandchild's Facebook page is unlikely to help her feel safe or manage a painful past of stigma and loss. This is particularly significant in small rural communities. There, elderly people often feel vulnerable to local gossip and have a strong sense of family privacy, which frustratingly often extends to protecting family members who are no longer alive.
- 21.5 It was common practice for single Irish or Scottish women expecting a child to travel to England or Wales for the latter part of their confinement. Sometimes women were not simply moved to maintain secrecy from their local community. They actively fled the risk of incarceration in one of the mother and baby homes (effectively workhouses) where isolated women in need of support were often ostracised, bullied and deprived of choices.
- 21.6 There are complexities in all family research where surnames are common and no home address was provided. In the case of births outside marriage, mothers frequently moved long distances from their home area to maintain secrecy; therefore, it can be hard to know where to search after finding the child's birth certificate. Apart from a mother's name, there can sometimes be little else to help focus the search.
- 21.7 CMT avoids using research methods that people would normally find intrusive. Usually, one of the first questions asked when a family is positively identified, will be: 'How did you find me?' Current trends in social media or open, public searches through local networks rarely produce positive outcomes, particularly because the search for child migrants' families is steeped in pain and loss. People can easily feel exposed and, as a consequence, may avoid a meeting with their child migrant relative.
- 21.8 Beyond these complex and sensitive practice issues, there are various other factors that impact upon searching for missing family members - a trail that has often been cold for more than sixty years.
- 21.9 Some government records that may hold the key to finding family, such as health or passport records, have never been accessible to the Trust. Hospital records from the 1940s have only rarely been preserved while privacy regulations are usually a barrier to access for 100 years, regardless of their relevance to a search for parents or other close family members.

- 21.10 Once all the records that can be identified have been retrieved, a detailed, forensic process of identifying and interviewing potential families is undertaken by the Trust. As the years pass, there are fewer people from the parents' generation still alive who may be able to confirm relationships, particularly those that were never recorded, such as the name of a putative father.
- 21.11 Shipping and citizenship records overseas are also frequently used to trace mothers who married American or Canadian servicemen in the 1940s. The Trust has found several such families in the USA and Canada.
- 21.12 When interviews with potential families identified have been completed but the outcome is inconclusive, modern technology such as DNA testing can sometimes provide clarity and direction. The cost can be significant, although this is becoming more mainstream practice as access to technology improves and DNA testing has entered popular culture for ancestral searching. In recent years, the surge in DNA research for genealogy has led to international databases that are beginning to make a difference. In recent years, CMT has resolved several very long-term (20+ years) searches, where conventional research had failed due to the absence of critical information.

22. Generational needs and legacy issues

- 21.13 Managing and understanding the past can be difficult for the adult sons and daughters of former child migrants, particularly where their parents are still alive but unwilling to discuss their painful past. Their legacy - brought up in the shadow of their parents' loss of identity and childhood abuse – is considerable and gathers momentum as their parents become increasingly frail.
- 21.14 Unlike many of their parents' generation who are intimidated by authorities and tend to avoid conflict, the next generation have grown up with greater emphasis on the rights of individuals and expectations that agencies must be held accountable for their actions. For the adult children of former child migrants, there are past, present and future implications for their own lives arising from their parent's migration.
- 21.15 Many former child migrants struggled to build warm, trusting relationships with partners and children as a consequence of their deprived, often brutal childhood, without close attachments or a sense of family or identity.
- 21.16 Lack of preparation for life after institutions left most without a route to secure employment or a sense of optimism for their future. The absence of structure and support - even the harsh security of the institutions – left many former child migrants vulnerable to exploitation and the predatory attentions of others.
- 21.17 Some former child migrants discovered extraordinary resilience to overcome the difficulties of their childhood and lead fulfilling family lives as successful parents and partners. However, many remain profoundly affected by their early loss and deprivation.
- 21.18 Many women married early, from a position of isolation and perceived low status in the world. Some found themselves imprisoned in oppressive, exploitative relationships, a painful reminder of their institutional experience. Many of the men emerged from the institutions emotionally inaccessible, unable to settle or build relationships and remained single all their lives.

- 22.1 The effect on their parenting could predictably be significant. For example, one former child migrant described their parenting style as 'very strict, institutionalised, hospital corners on the beds and no time to play with the children. It was all I knew and I felt judged all the time, never good enough.'
- 22.2 Similarly, the adult children of former child migrants frequently report their parents' refusal to discuss their lives or answer questions about the past. They describe flashpoints, such as questions about family medical history. Sometimes, these issues motivate former child migrants to approach the Trust for help, often accompanied by their adult children – 'It's about time dad found out about his family – they're my family too.' At times, adult children become too assertive and try to take a leading role in managing their parents' family reunion.
- 22.3 There are many ethical issues that require careful consideration, given that the Trust holds many detailed statements relating to historical abuse which former child migrants may never want their children to access. CMT can often provide children of former Child Migrants with information about their parent's early lives or introductions to other child migrants who knew their parent in childhood.
- 22.4 The needs of former child migrants' children and grandchildren raise important issues for the Trust in terms of the preservation and access to historical records, photographs and oral and written testimony.
- 22.5 At present, there is a growing demand from the children of former Child Migrants to learn about their parents' lives and to enjoy opportunities to meet uncles, aunts, cousins or other relatives. This work builds on family history and often results in the restoration of many significant family relationships.
- 22.6 Decisions taken to separate children from their families and country in the 1940s and 50s still have profound consequences for many hundreds of people across the world.

23. CMT Reunion work in Scotland

- 23.1 *'I have very few memories from home – from Scotland - and despite being now seventy-three years old, I still don't fully understand my family background or my early life. I never met my Mother. She died before I could afford to return to Scotland as an adult in the 1990s.'*
- 23.2 From its earliest days, the Trust has worked in Scotland to reunite former child migrants with their families. The Trust's reunion practice seeks to rebuild family relationships with a shared understanding of the past, particularly the wider context of the original separation of the child from his or her mother and family.
- 23.3 In the early 1990s, I worked with a Scottish child migrant in Western Australia whose childhood abuse was so extreme that he spoke of it as a near death experience. The survival of his spirit and his physical and psychological resilience were incredible. Yet he was ravaged by trauma, violence and rape that continued for years and impacted on every aspect of his life. Unable to father children as a direct result of vicious, repeated assaults in childhood, he sought relationships but always felt an outsider.
- 23.4 I sensed strongly that, for this man, finding his mother was critical. Despite his brutalised childhood and many layers of difficulty that followed, he had humour, empathy, and could articulate what it would mean to hold his mother in his arms. Yet he was also volatile, demanding, at times, even threatening – a genuine challenge for any social worker.
- 23.5 After a few months, we found his mother, alive, in Scotland. When we visited her, she expressed joy and relief to learn what had become of 'my tiny, wee boy.' Plans were made for their reunion. I was instructed that Mother was to be told nothing of his institutional experience, which concerned me as it was such a feature of his personality and presentation. Although I felt she needed some preparation, his wishes were honoured.

Ten years ago, CMT was approached by the daughter of a Scottish child migrant asking for help to understand her background and whether she had any family, anywhere. Her mother, ██████████, had died tragically many years before in a road traffic accident, leaving three little girls who were separated and placed with foster parents. They were placed into care on their mother's death as they had no extended family who could care for them in Australia. Yet, their late mother was one of eight children from Edinburgh. She had been sent to Australia, alone, in 1947 shortly after the tragic death of her own mother, also in a car accident, in Scotland. This was a tragedy with themes across generations.

CMT began working with the three sisters and firstly helped them prepare statements for the WA Redress scheme. Their foster placements had been painful and difficult. We researched their family in Scotland and following successful efforts, I travelled to Edinburgh and met their aunt. Their mother's older sister had been in care, but remained in Scotland. She had witnessed the breakdown of their family in the aftermath of their mother's death.

Apart from helping reunite this family across two generations, the meeting with ██████████'s sister had many strands of identity and connection that offered so much to the whole family. As she sat holding my hand, the elderly lady spoke movingly of trying to care for her younger siblings after their mother's death, and of brushing her little sister's long hair. ██████████ dear – she was never ██████████ always ██████████ with the ██████████

- 23.6 When he arrived in the UK, he stayed in Nottingham for a couple of days to recover from jet lag and prepare himself for a meeting he never expected could ever happen. We were unable to take the train to Glasgow - his anxiety could not bear the wait - so we went by plane instead.
- 23.7 My reunion practice is to accompany child migrants most of the way to their first meeting with family, sensitive to intrusion, or any distraction from such a meeting of mother and son after decades apart. I do all I can to help them manage it alone. However, he refused to meet his mother alone and reluctantly I went into his mother's house with him.
- 23.8 His mother was seated in a chair in the front room. He saw her, and ran into her arms, sat on her knee and hugged her saying – 'Mam, they raped me, they raped me.' His mother stared at me with a cold stare I'll never forget, but she hugged and comforted her son. After a time, I was able to leave them together with a little more safety and calm.
- 23.9 A week later, I was at my desk in Nottingham when the phone rang and a Scottish police officer asked for me. I could hear a woman screaming in the background- *'You arrest those priests in Western Australia! They hurt my boy!'* I was able to fill in the gaps for a confused police officer, who was trying to explain that he had no jurisdiction to investigate assaults that occurred overseas fifty years earlier.
- 23.10 CMT continues to work with Scottish child migrants, searching for families and supporting reunions. After thirty years, it could be anticipated that most families would have been found by now, but there are a range of factors that impact on the reality. Child migrants come forward in their own time – some never do and others are forcefully brought into CMT by their adult sons or daughters who are anxious for a resolution to their parent's crushing lack of identity or narrative.
- 23.11 Family reunions have captured public attention in recent years with many television series focussed on reunions in a variety of circumstances. Whilst this may help to promote a broader understanding of the impact of long term separation, such depictions are often exploitative, overly sentimental or fail to probe the often negative community views of mothers who were separated from their children. Myths and stereotypes can be promoted rather than challenged by media portrayals.
- 23.12 Well managed reunions can be transformative. Many former child migrants describe life before and after meeting their families as entirely different stages in their lives and are often shocked at the intensity and warmth of newly formed relationships. CMT seeks to create favourable conditions for the development of long term, sustainable relationships rather than focus on initial reunion experiences which may not flourish without professional help.
- 23.13 For example, a former child migrant introduced to his aunt and cousins described his reunion as the most powerful experience of his life. *'My cousins look like me and talk like me. We're more like brothers and I feel closer to them than I ever could have imagined possible. When my aunt met me, she hugged me so tight and I knew she meant it. I go back home every year and I'll keep going until I can't travel anymore.'*
- 23.14 The positive impact of family restoration can often bring about other benefits towards recovery from the legacy of child migration and institutional abuse. A stronger sense of personal and family identity frequently helps child migrants find the courage to address issues of historical abuse.

- 23.15 Following their family reunion, former child migrants often reflect on and reconsider their current relationships with partners and adult children. Many are now more open to insights into the impact of their personal history on their ability to establish trusting relationships. This often forms part of the Trust's post reunion counselling service or longer-term work.

24. Response of government and institutions

- 24.1 Unfortunately, before CMT was established in 1987, public knowledge or awareness of Britain's child migrants was extremely limited. Even today, many people react with a sense of shock and disbelief that so many children were sent abroad so recently.
- 24.2 Given its discredited history, it is not surprising that neither the Governments nor the agencies concerned with child migration were keen to accept any realistic measure of responsibility for the human costs of these schemes.
- 24.3 Similarly, until recent years there has not been made available a fraction of the resources, energy or cooperation to reunite former Child Migrants with their families that was previously given in order to separate them.
- 24.4 Child migration and the abuse suffered by children deported under these policies involves major institutions, including the Government, the Church, voluntary organizations such as Barnardos, Fairbridge and National Children's Homes. Some of these charities at the time received royal patronage.
- 24.5 At an early stage, I attempted to liaise with a number of organisations, including the Government, to discuss concerns and consider what could be done for former Child Migrants. At that time, a number of positive outcomes could have been achieved. There were solid grounds for substantial hope in these critical years when parents of child migrants were still very much alive. Yet, despite exhaustive efforts by CMT, the IAFCM&F and others, the UK government missed every opportunity over many years to acknowledge the truth about the child migration policy and provide effective support for former Child Migrants and their families.
- 24.6 A reluctance to listen and a refusal to take decisive action was demonstrated at all levels of government from the Prime Minister down (MH54). David Hinchliffe and other MPs raised many questions in Parliament on behalf of CMT from the late 1980s onwards, seeking secure and realistic funding levels for supporting child migrants and their families (MH55-59).
- 24.7 An All Party Group for British Child Migrants was created as a result of CMT lobbying (MH60). We and others on our behalf also wrote repeatedly to Ministers and officials about these issues (MH61 to MH67). The Ministers involved included many household names of the period such as John Major, Tony Blair, Ken Clarke, Stephen Dorrell, Virginia Bottomley, John Patten, Tim Yeo and Margaret Hodge. As well as No.10 the UK Government Departments we dealt with included the Home Office, the Department of Health, the Foreign Office and Department for Education and Skills.
- 24.8 We also prompted ongoing calls for an official UK inquiry into the policy and its consequences (MH68, MH69). A myriad of untenable excuses were put forward for refusing the official inquiry that would have given the child migrants their opportunity to speak truth to power and also enabled lessons to be learnt that might have prevented subsequent abuses.

- 24.9 The reasons deployed for resisting our requests are hopefully ones that, in hindsight, none of the key players will wish to repeat or justify e.g.:
- 24.10 “Any concern about the treatment of the children in another country is a matter for the authorities in that other country”. (MH70, MH71, MH72).
- 24.11 “The government does not consider itself responsible for the proportionately small number of cases in which the scheme failed to live up to their objectives”. (MH73)
- 24.12 “Child Migration was a policy formulated in a social climate very different from that of today” (MH73).
- 24.13 The CMT should be expected to “seek other funding sources” apart from government. (MH72).
- 24.14 As a result, the UK government failed former Child Migrants and their families first by sending them overseas, secondly by not providing them with adequate protection, and then finally failed them yet again by not funding adequate services or providing early reparations for the ongoing trauma and abuse they suffer as a direct consequence of this flawed policy.
- 24.15 Indeed, it is impossible to justify the discriminatory treatment of former child migrants compared to the standards required for children in care in the UK in the same period.
- 24.16 Even now, several years after a formal apology, we still do not have a sustainable, secure and adequately funded UK government strategy for responding to the legacy of the child migrant policy. As a result, the stark reality is that the opportunities for many of the reunions that should have taken place between adult children and their parents have been lost for ever because the people involved have died while waiting for adequate funding.

25. Funding

- 25.1 The full potential of the Trust to reunite families has been frustrated by decades of struggle for funds. There have been three broad stages in terms of Government funding for the Trust’s work with the first two stages each lasting for about ten years. The first stage involved a very minimalist response by the UK Government, both in terms of its extremely limited acceptance of its responsibilities for former Child Migrants and, consequently, its equally limited funding for their services. Denial played a key role at this stage and funding was more a token gesture than a serious attempt to tackle the problem.
- 25.2 The Trust proposed to the Department of Health that an initial effective level of service could be provided with a grant of £111,000 from April 1990 followed by a grant of £92,000 in each of the next two years. However, the Trust received only £20,000 in the first year with no further grants for the following two years. Funding resumed again in April 1993 but after annual grants of £30,000 over the next three years, the Trust then received £25,000 in 1997-98. The Trust's original request for a total of £295,000 over three years resulted in a single grant of merely £20,000. Even over a nine-year period, the total grants fell well short of the original target by more than £100,000.

- 25.3 The need for a reasonable sum over a fairly short period was based on the specific and urgent needs of the Trust's clients - to be reunited with elderly parents while they were still alive. Thus, the absence of any grant for a period of two vital years deprived the Trust's few staff of any hope of delivering even the most basic level of service. Funding was both totally inadequate and very insecure. Parents died who could have been found. Potential reunions between families and former child migrants were either delayed for years or the opportunities were completely lost.
- 25.4 Fortunately, in contrast, the Trust could rely on the consistent goodwill and support of Nottinghamshire County Council which provided my secondment to this work. This bold, generous decision gave the Trust a lifeline of reliable support.
- 25.5 The Council's financial support continued for about twenty years and took a variety of forms. For example, CMT's second book 'Empty Cradles' was launched at County Hall in 1994 where Nottinghamshire later dedicated the first UK memorial to former Child Migrants. Similarly, Nottinghamshire provided a vital telephone helpline after the television mini - series 'The Leaving of Liverpool.' It was also the key supporter of the 2002 International Congress on Child Migration. This attracted over ninety delegates from a wide range of professions and countries to New Orleans. Despite Government rhetoric about learning lessons, no representatives were sent by either the UK or Australian Governments.
- 25.6 Requests for other sources of funding were usually met with the clear reply that this was the responsibility of central government, given that the need stems as a direct consequence of UK Government policy. This explains the very low rate of positive responses to Nottinghamshire's approach to all local authorities in England and Wales for financial support for CMT.
- 25.7 Grants from Liverpool City Council and the UK Lottery Fund, private donations and royalties from CMT's books were also vital in helping to maintain the Trust's services. CMT has also been very fortunate in having key staff members and Trustees who, whether paid or volunteers, have worked very long hours with limited resources and short term contracts.
- 25.8 The second stage of funding stretched from the report by the UK Health Select Committee in July, 1998 to the UK Government apology in 2010. During this period the Trust generally received £150,000 per year but this was reduced in 2004 to £100,000 before being restored to its previous level the following year.
- 25.9 CMT funding was moved from the Department of Health without consultation when children's services were restructured. This was an ill-considered decision as the Trust's work did not fit the priorities of the Department of Education. Consequently, the Trust was involved in prolonged and difficult negotiations to secure a better outcome both in terms of its funding and a return to the Department of Health.
- 25.10 Finally, after the UK Government's apology, the Trust's expenditure has been in the region of £750,000 reducing to £650,000 per year, which is a more realistic level of grant given the need to provide family research and social work services on an international basis.

25.11 In addition, a £6 million Family Restoration Fund (FRF) was announced as part of the apology in 2010. This was increased by a further £2 million in 2017 when the fund was extended to the current scheduled end date of 2020. The demand for reunion travel remains as strong in 2019 as it has been throughout the life of the fund.

CMT will continue to argue that the Fund should remain available for as long as it is needed, given it was delivered by government as a vital measure in support of the national apology. Funding for the FRF will be considered in the Autumn spending review, so its fate remains uncertain. Indeed, the intention had been to close the FRF in 2017 but this proposal was resisted by the Trust.

25.12 This is the third and most flexible fund supporting family reunion travel and allows for at least three visits by former Child Migrants. The FRF is managed by the Trust according to guidelines agreed with the Department of Health. It is available to all former UK Child Migrants across the world with provisions to allow carers to accompany those with disabilities. The Fund has received universal support from the key beneficiaries – former Child Migrants and their families, who regard it as a lifeline and a very practical and humane measure. It is a substantial and symbolic success which provides a powerful contrast to the many failures of child migration policy.

26. Inquiries & National Apologies

26.1 Former child migrants sent from Scotland to Australia have been involved in various social justice initiatives over the past two decades. This small subset of former child migrants has both contributed to struggles for specific gains and received benefits such as the various travel funds which have been available to all former child migrants.

26.2 There have been two important parliamentary inquiries into child migration over the past twenty years by the UK Health Select Committee and the Australian Senate as well as the more recent Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse during 2017. Both resulted from the cumulative impact of campaigning by CMT and former child migrants after a decade of promoting awareness of this issue in the mass media. This relates also to the eventual inclusion of child migrants within IICSA, given lobbying was required to extend the period of IICSA's brief from an original starting date of 1970 back to 1945.

26.3 The UK Health Select Committee produced a relatively quick but short report in July 1998 with seventeen recommendations. These were broadly accepted by the Government, such as the need for a central database but many were implemented in a diluted form. For example, the Trust's funding was increased to £150k per year but not to the level recommended where it could offer a comprehensive service to all former child migrants. Similarly, the proposal for a travel fund was accepted but only for three years with funding of a million pounds which provided 450 reunion visits by former child migrants. Clearly, a single visit cannot begin to heal the wounds of decades of separation and the Fund reached perhaps less than a half of those who needed it.

26.4

- 26.5 The recommended apology was diluted to a statement of regret whilst the proposal for a conference of all interested parties to plan for a coherent future approach was not implemented. Similarly, requests for further government inquiries in Australia and New Zealand were not accepted. Thus, some useful rather than major steps were taken to advance the welfare of former child migrants. If services were to substitute for compensation, then this was by no means a fair or generous settlement as the provisions made were neither comprehensive nor enduring.
- 26.6 The Australian Government did not regard child migration as a priority for an Inquiry and indeed were considering ways to reduce or end the Trust's funding. Consequently, one of the key achievements of the Senate inquiry was to preserve CMT's funding. Its report – 'Lost Innocents: Righting the Record' – was published in August 2001. This report has ten chapters each of which is as long as the full UK report with twice as many recommendations.
- 26.7 The proposal for a travel fund was accepted and financed for three years but at over twice the level of the earlier UK version and resulted in just over 700 reunion visits. This was a very popular measure which was well received by former child migrants. However, there were no extra funds for the Trust despite the many obvious and additional demands created by the travel fund.
- 26.8 The proposal for memorials was accepted and each State involved in child migration eventually implemented this form of public recognition. Memorials were constructed in key major cities usually in the form of sculptures at Immigration Museums depicting former child migrants. Once again, the proposal for a full public apology was not accepted.
- 26.9 In June, 2009 the Senate reported on a review of the implementation of the 'Lost Innocents' recommendations. In its submission, the Trust expressed strong concern that some had only been implemented in a half-hearted way while others were rejected.
- 26.10 For example, the lack of a government apology clashed with the mounting evidence that they had suffered from serious forms of abuse – physical, sexual and emotional - during their childhood in Australian institutions. These submissions helped to persuade the Australian Government to make a public apology to former child migrants in November 2009. In addition, the Trust's grant in Australia was increased to a more realistic level which allowed for an extra worker at each office. An oral history project and exhibitions at national museums were also financed after the Apology with tours to major cities in Australia.
- 26.11 The UK apology was given by Gordon Brown as Prime Minister in February 2010 before an invited audience of former child migrants from the four countries involved in post-war migration. In addition, a £6million Family Restoration Fund was announced – the third and most well-resourced and flexible support for reunion travel.
- 26.12 I gave evidence before the Australian Royal Commission in March 2015 at its Sydney hearing on Redress and Civil Litigation (MH74). I referred to my early work with former Child Migrants and response to the disclosure of historical abuse, including institutional sexual abuse: *"When I first came to Australia and worked with former Child Migrants back in 1988, I raised with both the Australian and British governments the disclosure by many child migrants of childhood abuse. I have done this yearly since, every year. The immediate response from various organisations was to argue that this was the standards of the day. My response at that time, in 1988, was to ask, "When was it lawful to assault children?"*

- 26.13 In September 2015, CMT made a submission to the Victorian redress consultation following its inquiry into institutional sexual abuse of children. Sexual abuse is mentioned but does not form the focus since submissions were made in response to questions regarding the most appropriate forms of redress.
- 26.14 During the IICSA hearings in London, I gave evidence that sexual assault was commonplace at four institutions in Western Australia – Castledare, Clontarf, Tardun and Bindoon. These had also been shown as appalling environments in the investigation by the Australian Royal Commission. I stated that for decades, the Trust has provided former Child Migrants with specialist counselling to address serious historical abuse and has taken well over a hundred victim impact statements detailing appalling accounts of criminal abuse.
- 26.15 In my evidence, I underlined that children lived in a context of fear and deprivation; endless punishing labour, constant hunger and the constant threat of predatory sexual assaults or brutal attacks by adults. I also highlighted that there was growing evidence of organised paedophile activity and that the conviction rate of perpetrators is extremely low.

27. Redress initiatives

- 27.1 In contrast, following the final report by the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the National Redress Scheme opened on 1 July 2018. This is a much more complex undertaking as it covers a much larger group of potential claimants and provides different levels of payments. CMT has since received additional funding from the Australian Government to assist former child migrants with redress applications and to manage the considerable stress arising from issues relating to historical institutional abuse.
- 27.2 The British government has previously claimed, for example, at the 2010 National Apology that it provided support to former child migrants through funding for CMT, rather than individual reparations and redress. First, it is important to emphasise that we do not regard the two things as mutually exclusive. CMT consider child migrants are entitled to support services and the government should pay for this service which it does through the CMT.
- 27.3 Secondly, it is important to emphasise that although the UK government funds CMT, during the six-year period between 1987 and 1993 (when the nature and scale of the child migration scandal emerged) only one payment of £20,000 was made to the Trust. During this period, CMT received over 1,000 requests for services. Indeed, child migrants were at risk of not receiving adequate support for at least a decade after the truth was finally revealed. This included support for the consequences of sexual abuse, which a very large proportion of them had experienced. Timing is crucial for former child migrants and this represents a serious failure to provide timely reparation.
- 27.4 It was not until after the Health Select Committee produced its report in 1998 that funding levels for the CMT were more than minimalist, and post-national apology, twelve years later, that funding was increased to a realistic level. The current levels of funding allow us to make a real difference to the lives of former child migrants in line with best practice.

- 27.5 I had hoped that the IICSA report would finally succeed where I have failed in terms of the need for long term security of adequate funding for services. However, even today, planning support services remains difficult due to uncertainty around levels and security of funding.
- 27.6 A firm commitment to sustainable, long term funding is still required to maximise the diminishing opportunities remaining while former child migrants are still alive.

Individual Redress

- 27.7 The report of the child migration case study conducted by IICSA was published on 1st March, 2018. Its key recommendation - that the British Government should establish a scheme of financial redress for former child migrants within a year – was not seen as an urgent priority for several months. Finally, in December, 2018 the Government announced that it would accept this proposal. In January, 2019 details of the ex gratia payment scheme were made public. Surviving former child migrants would receive ex gratia payments of £20,000 as would the estate of those who had died on or after 1st March, 2018. The scheme was established in March, 2019 with the Trust involved in the application process and with confirming the status of applicants as former child migrants. By the end of September 2019 over 1,500 payments had been made, including 123 to former Child Migrants born in Scotland.
- 27.8 To remind the Government of the urgent need for action, the Trust displayed a countdown clock on its website showing the numbers of days since the IICSA recommendations and the number of deaths of former child migrants since 1st March, 2018. By the time of the Government's acceptance of the redress proposal in December 2018, 293 days had passed and 27 former child migrants known to the Trust had died without knowing if they would receive redress. That is only one of the many serious consequences of the very slow pace of the official response. Obviously, dozens more would die before the scheme was fully operational and the payments distributed.
- 27.9 Some former child migrants were disappointed with the relatively small amount of the payment, given the severe nature of their abuse. Others were pleased that the scheme was not based on a complex assessment process and treated all former child migrants equally.
- 27.10 Apart from the welcome support for a redress scheme, IICSA produced several other benefits and positive results. Once again, a spotlight of public attention was directed at both past child migration policy and its present consequences for those who had suffered from its worst features.
- 27.11 Those who had little idea of this obscure chapter in recent British history were given a glimpse of its impact on both the individuals concerned and their families via the reporting of the hearings. The powerful testimony of prominent figures like Gordon Brown, the former Prime Minister, also stimulated media and public interest.
- 27.12 Similarly, the IICSA report supported many of the conclusions reached by the Trust and gave them added credibility and a wider circulation.
- 27.13 The major burden of responsibility for the many faults in child migration policy and their terrible consequences for too many children was firmly placed by IICSA on the British Government whose weak and fragmented efforts in safeguarding these highly vulnerable children were fully exposed.

- 27.14 For example, on pages 150- 151, the report concluded that post-war child migration was ‘a fundamentally flawed policy, and that HMG failed to ensure that there were in place sufficient measures to protect children from sexual abuse (as well as other forms of abuse and neglect).’ In addition, the children were placed in environments ‘where they were exposed to a range of risks, including the risk of sexual abuse, and where sexual abuse was less likely to be prevented, identified, reported or stopped.’
- 27.15 Furthermore, ‘HMG failed to respond appropriately to the reports it received about the welfare of the children, by either stopping migration and returning the children, or putting in place other measures to reduce the risks to the children.’ The government’s slow response to provide effective support to former child migrants was linked to its failure to accept responsibility for this policy. This defensive position, ‘which sought to deny responsibility for the children and deflect it to others, was understandably offensive to the former child migrants.’
- 27.16 To conclude this dreadful catalogue of policy failure, the report noted that, as most former child migrants have died, ‘in many cases HMG has missed its opportunity to offer redress to those who were affected by its failure.’ Hence, the urgent need to offer redress quickly and ‘make a real, immediate and lasting difference to the lives of the former child migrants.’ Clearly, the redress has not been immediate. For those former child migrants struggling on benefits or pensions, it may make a real if not necessarily a lasting difference.

Legal Redress in the UK

- 27.17 CMT has worked hard since the early 1990s to assist former child migrants in their search for justice. In 1991, CMT made contact with solicitors in London who travelled to Australia to meet with some former child migrants. CMT was not party to the subsequent attempts to obtain compensation in England which were brought by former child migrants, some of whom were supported by CMT.
- 27.18 Since the 1990s, and over the last nearly 30 years, former child migrants have attempted to obtain legal redress through civil litigation in the courts in this jurisdiction. I am aware that former child migrants wanted to obtain such redress from both migrating organisations and the government. However, they have encountered a number of barriers to accessing justice. These obstacles included difficulties with obtaining legal aid funding and the statute of limitations. I am however unable to give evidence about these attempts in any detail as these were claims pursued by individuals rather than CMT.
- 27.19 Some of the difficulties of obtaining justice through the courts were recognised by the Health Select Committee. It said that the full weight of the law should be felt in cases where physical and sexual abuse could be proven and that the Courts should award the maximum possible damages when a conviction is obtained.
- 27.20 The Committee also stated that it would like to see the statutes of limitation suspended in all cases related to the abuse of former child migrants. However, as I understand it, the statute of limitations is still in place. Unlike recently in Australia, in the UK there has been no law reform to remove time limitations in historical child abuse cases, except in Scotland.

- 27.21 The Health Select Committee also recommended the government to consider child migrants in their review of legal aid. I do not know whether the government did in fact consider child migrants when making changes to the legal aid schemes.
- 27.22 More recently, across the U.K., there has been a gradual awareness of the need to restrict the use of time limitations as a defence in historical child abuse cases. The decision in Scotland to change the civil law in 2017 was a welcome development to remove this barrier in cases of historical abuses, specifically in respect of abuse which occurred after 26th September 1964.
- 27.23 For the minority of former Child Migrants who have considered civil claims, compensation has often been a lengthy, complex process, full of unpleasant surprises and frustrating delays. Whilst this is indeed a welcome development, the Limitation (Childhood Abuse) (Scotland) Act 2017 does not benefit the majority of Scottish former Child Migrants, as anyone whose abuse took place before 26th September 1964 will continue to be unable to make a claim for that abuse.
- 27.24 Another useful initiative in Scotland was the introduction of an Advance Payment Scheme. On 25th April 2019 the advance payment scheme opened for those for those who suffered abuse in care in Scotland before December 2004 and who have a terminal illness or are aged 70 or over.
- 27.25 It is also imperative that when cases do go to court that child migrants are treated with dignity and that they are not re-traumatised in cross-examination. In the 1993 class action against the Christian Brothers in Australia, a former child migrant was asked by the Christian Brothers' lawyer, whether he had not, in fact 'led the Brother on' in relation to sexual assaults. He was ten years old at the time of the assault.
- 27.26 This early form of redress involving a class action was settled out of court in Australia. Those who were accepted as having been abused while a resident in the care of the Brothers in Western Australia, which included many children sent from Scotland, were awarded amounts which ranged from about £1000 to £12,500 for the most serious cases.
- 27.27 Slater & Gordon lawyers brought this case in Sydney on behalf of around 250 claimants. I was not involved in this litigation but was issued with a subpoena for the records of my therapeutic work with child migrants who had been given assurances that these discussions would be confidential. This was a case in the Australian Supreme Court but a worldwide subpoena had been issued for the casework records which were in Nottingham. I engaged a lawyer to protect the integrity of my commitment to my clients. The penalty for non-compliance was a period of imprisonment. The subpoena was eventually withdrawn at the last minute, wasting precious time and limited funds which should have been devoted to reuniting families.
- 27.28 Unfortunately, however, I experienced considerable intimidation and harassment. I recall receiving one phone call telling me that when I next see my children they will be dead. The caller told me that the ants would have eaten their eyes out. My phone was tapped by order of the Attorney General in Australia and a regime of police protection was organised. There was continuing physical intimidation, shouted threats and an attempted break-in to my rented home-office in the evening whilst I was present.

- 27.29 At the same time, a former child migrant in Perth, WA who had supported CMT's work also experienced a period of threatening intimidation. One incident involved a young bird, with its throat cut and heart hanging out, left dangling from the front door of his home. He understood this to be a warning and an accusation that he was a traitor.
- 27.30 The Slater & Gordon class action was settled out of Court. Those who were accepted as having been abused while in the care of the Catholic Brothers in Western Australia were awarded amounts which ranged from about £1,000 to £12,500 for the most serious cases. The Brothers also issued an apology in 1993.
- 27.31 In relation to redress matters, such as the Catholic Church 'Towards Healing' program in Australia, many former Child Migrants have reported they felt coerced to accept minimal redress through a 'take it or leave it' attitude that belies the title of that scheme. Indeed, some felt a sense of *déjà vu*. Just as their childhood institutions lacked care, so they now struggled to feel any genuine sense of healing through this process. These are important concerns in relation to any role the institutions might play in a future redress scheme.
- 27.32 The continuing imbalance of power remains a toxic factor for adult survivors of historical child abuse. Many former Child Migrants have reported secondary abuse from these meetings. In one instance, a child migrant was told by the head of a religious order: 'We've heard this all before,' and 'you girls are taking our pensions.' These difficult encounters carry serious risks of re-traumatisation and lack respect or any semblance of a genuine response.
- 27.33 If schemes or settlements are to take place outside of the courtroom, these must be conducted independently. Most former child migrants, who participated in the Christian Brothers' review of past financial settlements following the 2014 Royal Commission public hearings in Australia, reported it was little more than aggressive negotiations over payment levels. Despite reassurances that they would not have to face the Christian Brothers, they were pressured to do so in every case reported to the CMT. Under this structure, the Christian Brothers controlled the process and set the tariff themselves.
- 27.34 As we understand it, not one referral was made to the police regarding historical criminal abuse during that flawed scheme. Most former child migrants said they went along with the process because there was no independent alternative and they remain desperate for resolution of justice and redress issues.
- 27.35 Over the years, former Child Migrants have had little choice about re-engaging with the institutions if they wanted to access their historical records, reunite with childhood friends, or seek redress through institutional processes even though these lack any external or independent accountability. CMT has frequently heard complaints of present day interactions with the institutions where former Child Migrants felt powerless or experienced denial that triggered memories of childhood trauma.
- 27.36 In considering matters of redress and the postcode lottery response that relates more closely to the laws and opportunities where people live than to the severity of abuse they suffered, it is vital to underline a continuing official reluctance to face painful facts. Thousands of child migrants have been abused while in the care of voluntary child care agencies and different levels of government have failed to safeguard their interests over many decades.

- 27.37 Urgent issues facing former Child Migrants continue to be met with slow, half-hearted responses from a range of agencies, officials and governments. In many respects, questions of redress remain very much unfinished business for former Child Migrants. Time has never been on their side. While some child migrants are available to speak to you today, sadly, others never received any form of redress or recognition before they died. This inquiry is a welcome opportunity for real institutional change and truth-telling, as was IICSA and the HIA.
- 27.38 There have been several inquiries and redress schemes in different jurisdictions. Sometimes this necessitated former Child Migrants having to meet directly with the organisation responsible for their sexual and physical assaults, degrading treatment and slavery. Some of those schemes have taken place behind closed doors, without due process guarantees, or required non-disclosure agreements and waivers of the right to any further action.
- 27.39 Since 1987, we have been attempting to obtain redress for those deported under the child migration schemes. The primary responsibility of the damage and harm caused to the Child Migrants rests with the Governments concerned. However, the redress has been patchwork and, in many cases, the law with its statutes of limitation has worked to prevent former Child Migrants from obtaining justice.
- 27.40 Three State redress schemes were established in Australia; Tasmania in 2003, Queensland in 2007 and Western Australia in 2008. These schemes focused on all care leavers, which included former Child Migrants and indigenous children.
- 27.41 The West Australian scheme had by far the most child migrant applicants because it received half of all children deported to Australia. The initial maximum payment of \$80,000 was reduced to \$45,000 following a change in Government. Most former Child Migrants received the highest level of payment, in view of the serious degree of abuse suffered.
- 27.42 The schemes in Tasmania and Queensland covered a much smaller population of former Child Migrants and provided average payments of \$35,000 in Tasmania and between \$7,000 and \$40,000 in Queensland. The recent UK redress scheme is also worth \$35,00 to former Child Migrants in Australia.
- 27.43 In New South Wales, given the lack of any state government redress scheme, about one hundred and sixty former child migrants from Fairbridge, Molong spent several years in civil litigation. Several claimants died before the case was resolved in 2015. This was the largest settlement at \$24million for any group of children in care in Australia, involving both the state and the federal governments as well as Fairbridge.
- 27.44 In Canada, New Zealand and Zimbabwe there have not been any redress measures made available to former child migrants. Fairbridge, which was responsible for all child migrants sent to Canada after 1935, is no longer in existence.
- 27.45 On 1 September 2014, I gave oral evidence at the Northern Ireland Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry (MH75) after providing a written submission in July 2014 (MH76). The HIA presented its report in January 2017.
- 27.46 Recommendations from the HIA Inquiry were well received by former child migrants, but again justice delayed becomes justice denied. The collapse of the NI Executive shortly after the HIA report was tabled has left a void in decision making. Over two years later, the redress scheme remains a recommendation, albeit now in draft form, rather than a reality.

- 27.47 The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was established in Australia in early 2013 and presented its final report in December 2017. The Child Migrants Trust was a stakeholder to the Royal Commission in Australia. I was consulted by the Australian Government and the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, during the planning period which preceded this positive announcement.
- 27.48 On 1 July 2018, the Australian Government opened its National Redress Scheme, which is limited to historical institutional sexual abuse, and payments are capped at \$150,000 for the most serious forms of abuse. There are various complexities within the assessment framework, including factoring in previous redress settlements that will be indexed and subtracted from any eventual award. Whilst positive in principle, those former child migrants living for decades with the injustice of horrific institutional child abuse are eligible only if they identify as having been sexually abused.
- 27.49 There are many variables that will impact upon an elderly person's willingness to identify as eligible for a redress scheme limited to sexual abuse, particularly if, as is the case for the majority, they have never previously disclosed childhood sexual assault. For many, there are complex emotional and identity costs which need to be balanced against the potential benefits of any award.
- 27.50 A Scottish child migrant recently told CMT: *'Even now I can't imagine that anyone will believe me, as I've held these secrets for nearly sixty years. I never told anyone, not even my late wife who I trusted above all others. Never wanted to tell her something that would make her ashamed of me. I don't want my children to be disgusted by me either.'*
- 27.51 As at 30th June 2019, the Redress Scheme had received about 4,000 applications but had only made 215 payments, at an average amount of \$82,635. This is much too slow for elderly former Child Migrants. CMT has been funded by the Australian Government to provide Redress Support Services to all former child migrants across Australia.

28. What is needed now?

- 28.1 Former child migrants continue to require specialist, independent professional help to ensure they enjoy the same rights and opportunities as other people. A lifetime of disadvantage following a childhood of deprivation, deception and abuse demands good quality, long term services. Recovery from historical institutional abuse is a complex process which can take many years. Often there is no initial disclosure for several years after the trauma. Some former child migrants have only recently begun to address the painful legacy of their childhood abuse.
- 28.2 The majority of former child migrants have now been reunited with their families, though many still have missing relatives – for example, they may have found their mother’s family but lack information regarding their father’s relatives.
- 28.3 The following measures are important strands of a strategy to promote recovery and well-being for Scotland’s child migrants and their families:
- 28.4 The early announcement by the Scottish Government of plans to establish advance payments and a redress scheme has been welcomed by the child migrant community. Consideration of redress measures that acknowledge the scale of harm and multiple losses arising from child migration are required. Existing redress measures have not been consistent, comprehensive or adequate. No payments have been made, for example, for those who lost opportunities to meet their families. Yet this has been a profound source of distress to many former Child Migrants and their families - clearly, a serious breach of basic human rights.
- 28.5 Continued funding of independent, specialist professional services to trace and reunite families.
- 28.6 The present management of records lacks the organisation and urgency which is vital to the welfare of former Child Migrants and their families. Removal of historical records from agencies that abused their power in the past and centralisation within a government department with a clear access protocol would alleviate much fear and distress.
- 28.7 Better, more streamlined access to Scottish birth, death and marriage records for government funded, independent, professional agencies to assist former child migrants searching for their families would be helpful.
- 28.8 Former child migrants sent abroad from Scotland still need continued funding of the British Government’s Family Restoration Fund to ensure that those who find their families can undertake international reunion travel, for as long as it is needed. The Fund has been a considerable success in terms of removing the financial barriers to reunions and helping to restore some of the routines and rituals of ordinary family life.
- 28.9 Thus, visiting relatives who have been admitted to hospital or nursing care and attending weddings or funerals is now a practical possibility for former child migrants. We no longer have the dreadful situation where a former child migrant was desperately trying to save enough money to visit his mother who had been traced by the Trust. Sadly, his mother died just as he reached his destination and he was only able to attend her funeral.

28.10 Legislation should be considered to ensure ethical independent practice is made available that does not compound the original damage through ill-considered interventions by past service providers or perpetrators of historical abuse.

This also requires cultural change so that the dangers of secondary abuse are fully appreciated by those funding and providing services to former child migrants and their families. Similarly, there needs to be greater awareness of the risks attached to services which lack sufficient independence from agencies which permitted or failed to prevent abuse on their premises or abuse by members of their staff.

28.11 Scottish child migrants have a strong sense of cultural identity and feel connected and bound to their Homeland. A memorial to child migrants and their families in Scotland would have lasting significance and be seen as a meaningful gesture that follows the spirit of Gordon Brown’s Apology in 2010. While this was a nation’s apology, it seems optimistic to believe that it created a national impact. The absence of any memorials in London or Edinburgh is seen by former Child Migrants as a sign that denial remains a powerful force.

28.12 Consequently, there are many opportunities remaining to reinforce the message of the apology through cultural initiatives like museum exhibitions, memorials, and educational events. Much less attention has been given to the cultural component of the national apology in the UK compared to Australia, for example, where State memorials provide a local dimension and reminder of their national apology. The exhibition on child migration at London’s Museum of Childhood in 2015 was obviously not designed with visitors from Scotland in mind. Indeed, this was an Australian initiative which arrived on tour in the UK after travelling to major cities in Australia.

28.13 This inquiry in Scotland can throw a spotlight on one of the darkest episodes in the childcare history of several nations. The toxic cocktail of deceit, racism, outdated ideologies, abuse and weak regulation created a living hell for many children and damaged many families.

28.14 There are still vital lessons to be learnt from this policy disaster about the measures required to enforce minimum standards of care and the need to nurture personal identity and family relationships. Recovery depends on both the courage of the survivors and the quality of help offered to them. It also depends on the critical intelligence, imagination and moral courage of politicians and policy makers to confront past mistakes without resorting to reactions of delay and denial. Concepts like secondary abuse and the need for independent services should become key components of policy making in this field.

Clearly, there is considerable need for radical improvements. Indeed, a culture change is urgently required, so that a more open, adequate and rapid response is made by governments and any other agencies involved.

Signed 
Dr Margaret Humphreys CBE OAM

22nd October 2019

Date

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