

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry – Child Migrant Case Study – Whinwell Children’s Home, Stirling.

Report relating to records held at Stirling Council Archives 1900 – 1980

1. Policies and procedures

- a) What policies and/or procedures did the organisation and its establishment(s) have in place in relation to child migration?

The Council Archives holds no policy documents or minutes relating to the Whinwell Home. No such records were deposited with the Council when the records were transferred here from the solicitors firm Jenkins and Jardine on 14th April 1981. The Home was opened in 1884 and initially based at Springfield House, The Craigs, Stirling. Whinwell House was purchased in 1890. The Home was originally managed by Miss Annie Knight Croall (1854 – 1927) and was run by a Board of Trustees after her death. The Home was closed in 1980 and responsibility for the children living there at the time taken over by the Aberlour Childcare Trust.

The only record within the collection that gives any evidence of the aims and intentions of those running the Home are the series of annual reports running from 1884 to 1980.

The 1903 Annual Report defines the regulations of the home. They are:

“Children Eligible for Admission – Boys and girls between 1 and 7 years of age, are admitted.

No children admitted unless utterly destitute, with no one to care for them or help them.

Children are admitted without payment or promise of a fee”. (1903, pp.4-5)

The same report also states its policy regarding emigration:

“It should be distinctly understood that in the event of the child’s admission, the child’s nearest relative or guardian must sign the agreement, giving the Principal power to send the child to any situation either in this country, or the Continent of Europe, or in our Colonies, or dispose of the child in any way the Managers think would be for the child’s benefit and future good”. (1903, p.5)

The aims stated above are reiterated in the 1914 Annual Report in a section dedicated to children eligible for admission. This includes their policy on emigration:

“It should be distinctly understood that, in the event of the child’s admission, the child’s nearest relative or guardian must sign the agreement, giving the Principal power to send the child to any situation either in this country or abroad, or dispose of the child in any way the Principal and her representatives think best for the child’s future good” (1914, p.4). This means that decisions were made at the discretion of the Superintendent of the Home.

The 1914 annual report also records what procedures were in place when children were sent to Liverpool:

“Our children who are sent to Canada emigrate through a Liverpool Agency, carried on for fifty years by Miss Birt, who receive boys between ten and fourteen years of age, girls between four and sixteen years...when trained and thought fit for emigration they go to Canada” (1914, p. 8).

“Before leaving Stirling, the children must be examined and the big blue schedule must be carefully filled in and signed by a doctor; when they reach Liverpool they are again medically examined; before they leave Liverpool the ship’s doctor must see the little people

and have a word to say in the matter; and on reaching Canada it must be medically proved that the child emigrants are fit to settle in the new country. All safely passed and in good health and fitness, the children soon reach the Distributing quarters, the Knowlton Home in the Province of Quebec” (1914. P.8).

A change to their policy on emigration can be seen in 1921. This appears to be owing to financial constraints:

“Owing to new arrangements in shipping, and Canadian management regarding child emigration, we may not be able to send so many children abroad in the future. The policy of settling children overseas, which was pursued for many years before the war is much more difficult to carry out now.

When we first started sending children to Canada, thirty years ago, it cost about £12 per head; now it costs £40 – a big difference” (1921, p. 4).

b) Was there a particular policy and/or procedural aim/intention?

Some background information regarding the Home may be helpful at this point given that there are no written policies or minutes available for the institution. The first report for Whinwell Home dates from 1884. Based at Springfield House, Craigs, Stirling, the Home was called ‘Stirling Creche and Home for Neglected & Destitute Children’. The President of the Home was Mrs Goldie of Albert Place, with Mrs MacLuckie, Mrs Drummond, Mrs Stirling and Mrs Dundas forming the Committee. The Superintendent and Secretary of the Home was Miss Annie K. Croall. In the first report of 1884 it is stated that the Home is ‘open for young children whose mothers are obliged to leave their homes during the day’ and for ‘permanent reception of orphans, and those from any cause bereft of their natural protectors’ (1884, p.2). At this date 17 children had been admitted to the Home and 6 had left (1884, p. 3). The annual report in 1887 sets out the clear aims of the Home. It states that ‘At Springfield Home no absolutely destitute child is ever refused admission. On the other hand no child is admitted who is not absolutely destitute’ (1887 p. 4). The first instance of emigration in the annual reports appears in 1888. Of the six children admitted to the Home that year, three were sent to Nova Scotia. Miss Croall notes that ‘those three children were the first sent from our Home in Stirling to that Quarter’. This specifically refers to a Miss Stirling of Edinburgh, who had offered to help Whinwell Home staff in their ‘Child Rescue Work’ by ‘admitting suitable cases to her Home in Nova Scotia’. Miss Croall also states that the Home would be ‘glad to receive any donations sent specifically for this Emigration Scheme’ (1888, p. 4). The cost of emigrating these children appears in the abstracts of accounts for 1889. An ‘Emigration Fund’ is listed in the abstracts of accounts for 1890. In 1890 the Home moved to Upper Bridge Street, Stirling and became the ‘Whinwell Home’. The first instance of a set policy/procedure for admission to the Home appears in 1890. Miss Croall writes that ‘applications for admission of children should be addressed to Miss Croall...and full particulars given. If, after necessary investigation, the case appears eligible, a form of application is given, the questions on which must be answered by the applicant, and the form returned as soon as possible’ (1890, p4.). The first major report on emigration occurs in 1891 (1891, p. 6-8). The scheme used is again the one run by Miss Stirling in Edinburgh. Unfortunately there is nothing in this report that relates to the questions below. Donations to the Emigration Fund appear in the abstracts of accounts for 1891. In 1892, it cost £8 to send a child abroad and donations are described as being encouraged. Reasons given in the Annual Report for sending the children abroad relate to allowing them to have a fresh start in life, and it states that they are placed in ‘natural, cheerful, Christian households of the Dominion’ (1892, pp. 9-10). The first instance of a child going to South Africa appears in 1893 (1893, p.14) but no evidence is given of under what scheme this took place. In order to deal with extra numbers, a second Home in

Braco was opened temporarily. It was called 'Edengrove'. (1895, p. 7) A new wing of the Home was opened on 20th April 1897 (1897, p. 12). A further Home was opened in Largo in Fife in 1901. In 1899, it stated that the overall costs of emigration were £90. It is also stated that a grant of £37 10s was given from the 'Thomas Porter Equipment Fund' (1899. p.5). This was a fund set up with money from a bequest and was intended to pay for clothes and equipment for children from the Whinwell Home to help them get a start in life. This included but was not confined to paying for emigration expenses. Copies of all relevant annual report entries between 1900 and 1980 are provided along with all of the other documentation that accompanies this report.

See above for policies/procedures implemented after 1900. The one from 1914 outlines the approach taken most clearly.

c) Where were such policies and/or procedures recorded?

As has been outlined above, there are no formal records in the Whinwell Home collection held at the Council Archives that contain policies and procedures; the aims and basic procedures were outlined in the annual reports. . Evidence must be gathered both from the annual reports and the individual children's files along with supplementary records such as the emigration register and the records of the Thomas Porter Equipment Fund.

d) What did the policies and/or procedures set out in terms of the following: -

- i) Identification and checking the suitability of the places where children were sent
- ii) Selection of children to migrate including age, gender and background
- iii) Provision of information to the child and/or his/her parents before migration
- iv) Provision of information and records to children and/or their parents once the child had been migrated
- v) Obtaining consent of child
- vi) Obtaining consent of parents of child
- vii) Obtaining of consent of others e.g. Secretary of State
- viii) Responding to requests for information from former child migrants
- ix) Other issues

In the absence of any formal policies and procedures and of minutes relating to the administration of the Home, evidence relating to the above must be gathered from the other records that we hold for it, the principal approach being given in the Annual Reports as outlined above.

Having looked through these, there is a sense that such decisions were not based on hard and fast rules as such, but were made on a case-by-case basis according to the circumstances of each child or children concerned and their families. The letters that exist in each file give clear evidence of the judgements made in each case, and taken cumulatively, enable one to build up a picture of what the practice was in the Home. What is constantly restated is that once the parent or parents of the child or children had signed the agreement form with the Home to give up their children, the Superintendent of the Home felt free to make whatever decision she saw fit regarding their future, including migration if this was felt to be a suitable course of action. This was made clear to the parents and the wording of the agreement is unambiguous on this issue, the important clause being that the parents gave the home the 'power to send the child to any situation either in this country or abroad, or dispose of the child in any way the Principal and her representatives think best for the child's future good' (1914. p4).

Miss Croall regularly took decisions concerning contact between families and their children and frequently discouraged this contact, citing the best welfare of the child as justification for this. There is no evidence that the Superintendent of the Home was responsible for

obtaining the consent of the Secretary of State for the migration of children. As all the children from Whinwell were sent to other organisations in Liverpool and London under long-standing arrangements before they left the country, it can only be assumed that these organisations were responsible for seeking this consent.

e) Who compiled the policies and/or procedures?

See answers a) to d) above.

f) When were the policies and/or procedures put in place?

See above.

g) Were such policies and/or practices reviewed?

See above.

h) If so, what was the reason for review?

See above.

i) What substantive changes, if any, were made to the policies and/or procedures over time?

Details of the main statements of practice given in the annual reports are given in the table below: -

Year	Page	
1903	4	Regulations for the Home are set out including admission specifications. This includes note on emigration that when admitting a child it is agreed that the child can be sent to any situation in Britain, Europe or colonies.
1914	4-5	Very specific section on eligibility of children for admission. Includes section concerning emigration and that and agreement must be made allowing the home to send the child abroad if they think it is in the best interests of the child.
	8	Section dedicated to emigration and the processes that take place. Most detailed reference so far. States that all children who emigrate to Canada are sent through a Liverpool Agency ran by Miss Birt. Process when in Liverpool detailed.
1921	4	Note on change of policy regarding emigration of children. Cost of sending children has risen and other factors making it more difficult to send as many children abroad.
1934	9	Note of improved conditions in Australia allowing the Child Emigration Society to select six children for emigration.
1951	2	Note that emigration is closed to Whinwell residents in the mean time

j) Why were changes made?

It is not possible to answer this in any detail as there are no specific statements of policy in the records. However, there is evidence that financial implications prevented the home from sending more children abroad in 1921, see the response to question 1a) above.

k) Were changes documented?

See above.

l) Was there an audit trail?

See above.

2. A report addressing the following in relation to Organisation's practice in respect of the migration of children whose care originated in Scotland for the period 1 January 1900 to 17 December 2014.

a) Did the organisation and its establishments(s) adhere in practice to its policy/procedures in terms of child migrants relating to the following: -

i) Identification and checking the suitability of the places where children were sent.

Arrangements were made with other institutions including The Sheltering Home, Myrtle Street, Liverpool, Doctor Barnardo's Home, Stepney Causeway, London and the Scottish branch of the NSPCC and they in turn had long-standing arrangements with contacts in Canada and Australia including Kingsley Fairbridge's Farm School Society of Western Australia and the Knowlton Home in the Province of Quebec. Consequently, the Superintendent of the Whinwell Home did not make the ultimate decision about where the children were to be sent. The children left Stirling and spent some time in Liverpool or London before they sailed for Canada or Australia.

ii) Selection of children to migrate including age, gender, background.

Selection appears to have been made on a case-by-case basis according to whether the Superintendent felt that it was in the best interests of the child that they be sent abroad. Evidence of this exists in the correspondence in the children's files. There is no statement given in the records of what criteria were used to determine which children were chosen to emigrate.

iii) Provision of information to the child and/or his/her parents before migration.

There is little information in the records to enable one to establish what the practice was with regard to this. It is certainly clear that Miss Croall regarded this decision as hers to make once the agreement to hand the child over to the home had been signed by the parent.

iv) Provision of information and records to children and/or their parents once the child had been migrated.

It is clear from the records in the children's files that the Superintendent regularly took decisions as to whether families should be given information regarding their children abroad and vice versa based on what she regarded as the best interests of the child. Contact was discouraged in many cases and the reasons stated in the correspondence. Again, there is no statement in the records of any specific policy relating to this issue and it would appear to have been decided on a case-by-case basis.

v) Obtaining consent of child

There is little evidence that this was done systematically. Some case files contain statements in correspondence that the child is willing to emigrate.

vi) Obtaining consent of parents of child.

This was obtained by the signing of the agreement to place the child in the Home. This consent was a blanket one giving the Superintendent the power to dispose of the child as she saw fit. No specific consent was sought from the parents to the child being sent abroad.

vii) Obtaining of consent of others e.g. Secretary of State

There is no evidence in the records of the consent of other parties having been obtained in any case.

viii) Responding to requests for information from former child migrants.

There is a good deal of correspondence in the children's files sent by children abroad to the Superintendent that gives evidence of the exchange of information. It would appear that Miss Croall maintained correspondence with a number of the children once they had left the Home and were living overseas. Again, there are cases in which information was withheld from children and/or their families using the justification of this being in the best interests of the child.

ix) Other issues

Information about all issues is contained in the children's files.

b) How was adherence demonstrated

As there were no set policies or procedures, there is no evidence in the Whinwell Home collection to answer this question.

Policies and procedures for emigration are outlined in some Annual Reports. As migration was dealt with on a case-by-case basis, it is impossible to understand fully if there was a strict adherence to these as it is not possible to be sure that all documentation survives for each case file. Certainly it would seem that in all cases, the admission and agreement forms were completed for each child with the parent(s) signatures or marks on the agreement, as these forms are present in almost all of the case files held at the Archives. These forms have been scanned and are included with the documents submitted to the Inquiry.

c) How can such adherence be demonstrated to the Inquiry?

See answer to b) above.

d) Were relevant records kept demonstrating adherence?

I am unable to state unequivocally that this is the case as it is impossible to tell from the records that we have if other records were created that were subsequently lost or destroyed.

e) Have such records been retained?

It is impossible to tell from the material relating to the Whinwell Home that was deposited with the Council Archives if such records were ever created.

f) If policy/procedure was not adhered to in practice, why not?

See answer to b) above.

g) How many children were sent as child migrants from the organisation's establishments, and where were they sent?

The surviving records in the care of the Archives show that 114 children were sent abroad from the Whinwell Home, of these, 96 went to Canada, 14 to Australia and for the remaining 4, there is no clear record of their destination. Please see Appendix 1 for more information on the child migrants from the Whinwell Children's Home.

h) What was their age and gender?

Of the 114 children, 72 were male and 42 female. For details of ages, please see Appendix 1.

i) Over what time period were children migrated from the Organisation's establishments?

Accounts of children being sent abroad begin to appear in the Annual Reports in 1888. There is no further mention of children emigrating in the Annual Reports after 1940.

j) Who funded the child migration?

There are no dedicated records held as part of the Whinwell Home collection that give this information. The Thomas Porter Fund met some of the costs for passage and clothing. Some costs were undoubtedly met by the Parish of origin or settlement of the child or children involved. As the home was voluntary, it relied heavily upon subscriptions and donations. The annual reports give very good specific details about how much they received every year through subscriptions and from whom. The Thomas Porter Fund was one of the main sources of income for emigration. See below for financial references in annual report:

Year	Page	
1900	3	Reference to Thomas Porter's Equipment Fund
	23	Thomas Porter's Fund - special donations
	32	Abstracts of accounts - emigration and travelling outfits costs.
1901	24	Thomas Porter's Fund - special donations
	36	Abstracts of accounts - emigration, travelling and outfitting costs.
1902	19	Thomas Porter's Fund - special donations
	31	Abstracts of accounts mention emigration, travelling and outfitting costs.
1903	18	Thomas Porter's Fund - special donations
	32	Abstracts of accounts - emigration and outfitting costs
1904	18	Thomas Porter's Fund - special donations
	31	Largo Home emigration fund mentioned in donations
	32	Abstracts of accounts mention emigration for Whinwell
1905	17	Thomas Porter's Fund - special donations
	32	Abstracts of accounts mention emigration and outfitting costs.
1906	20	Thomas Porter's Fund - special donations
	20	Donation of emigration cost for one child mentioned in special donations
	32	Abstracts of accounts mention emigration and outfitting costs.
1907	20	Thomas Porter's Fund - special donations
	31	Abstracts of accounts - emigration and equipment fund
1908	20	Thomas Porter's Fund - special donations
	32	Abstracts of accounts - emigration and equipment fund
1909	19	Thomas Porter's Fund - special donations
	32	Abstracts of accounts - emigration costs
1910	22-23	Thomas Porter's Fund - special donations
	36	Abstracts of accounts - emigration and equipment costs
1911	21-22	Thomas Porter's Fund - special donations
	35	Abstracts of accounts - emigration and equipment costs
1912	17	Expenses of one boy to Canada – special donations
	17	Thomas Porter's Fund - special donations
	32	Abstracts of accounts - emigration and equipment fund

Year	Page	
1913	23	Subscriptions and donations to the emigration and equipment fund specifically listed
	36	Abstracts of accounts - emigration and equipment costs
1914	23	Subscriptions and donations to the emigration and equipment fund specifically listed
	35	Abstracts of accounts - emigration and equipment costs
1915	19	Subscriptions and donations to the emigration and equipment fund specifically listed
	30	Abstracts of accounts - emigration and equipment costs
1916	17-18	Subscriptions and donations to the emigration and equipment fund specifically listed
	28	Abstracts of accounts - emigration and equipment costs
1919	20	Emigration funds – special donations
1920	3	Reference to Thomas Porter Equipment Fund and Canada Overseas Settlement Company regarding money refunded.
	12	Subscriptions and donations to the emigration and equipment fund specifically listed
1929	14	Note in Treasurer's report concerning Thomas Porter Fund donation
1930	13-14	Note in Treasurer's report concerning Thomas Porter Fund donation
1932	22	Abstracts of accounts – emigration expenses.
	26	Abstracts of accounts – emigration expenses.
1935	14	Note in Treasurer's report concerning Thomas Porter Fund donation
	26	Abstracts of accounts – emigration expenses.
1937	26	Abstracts of accounts – emigration expenses.
1940	22	Abstracts of accounts – emigration expenses.

k) Who received the funding?

It is not possible to find this information from the records held here for the Whinwell Children's Home. Donations are listed in the Abstracts of Accounts within the Annual Reports, as is expenditure on emigration but there is no detail as to what this money was spent on and to whom payments were made.

l) In general terms. How much was this funding?

The only information relating to funding is given in the Annual Reports of the Home. All Abstracts of Accounts relating to the Emigration Fund have been scanned and included with the documents supplied in response to this Section 21 Notice.

m) How did the Organisation/establishment respond to requests for information from former child migrants?

Information relating to this is found in correspondence held within the individual children's files. There is no evidence of a written policy on this issue and the Superintendent responded to the requests as she saw fit on a case-by-case basis.

3. All relevant documents held by Stirling Council Archives relating to the migration abroad of children whose care originated in Scotland who had resided in any establishment operated by the Whinwell Children's Home have been scanned and will be supplied to the Inquiry Team along with this report.
4. There are no documents held by Stirling Council Archives relating to the Whinwell Children's Home dating from the period 17th December 2014 to date.
5. A spreadsheet giving the details of all documents supplied in response to paragraph 3 above is given at Appendix 2 to this report.

6. I am not aware of any records relating to the Whinwell Children's Home being held elsewhere.
7. All relevant records are supplied as digital images.
8. A list of all the children whose care originated in Scotland and who had resided in any establishment operated by the Whinwell Children's Home who were migrated abroad during the period 1st January 1900 to 17th December 2014 is given at Appendix 1 to this report.

Pam McNicol.

Stirling Council Archivist

October 2018