

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Timescale & institutions - Northern Ireland child migration .....	5
3. Institutional experiences in Northern Ireland.....	6
4. Process of Selection .....	8
5. Parental knowledge and consent for migration .....	9
6. Placements in Australia & summary of institutional care .....	10
7. Access to records.....	12
8. Family tracing experiences – need for CMT services.....	14
9. The impact of separation and trauma .....	16
10. Importance of Independence – examples of flawed practice .....	19
11. Research complexities.....	21
12. Child migration across borders .....	23
13. Generational needs and legacy issues .....	23
14. CMT reunions in Northern Ireland.....	25
15. Social justice initiatives .....	26
16. What is needed now?.....	29
17. Appendix 1 – <span style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 0 2px;">HIA 307</span> Case Study & Timeline.....	31

## 1. Introduction

---

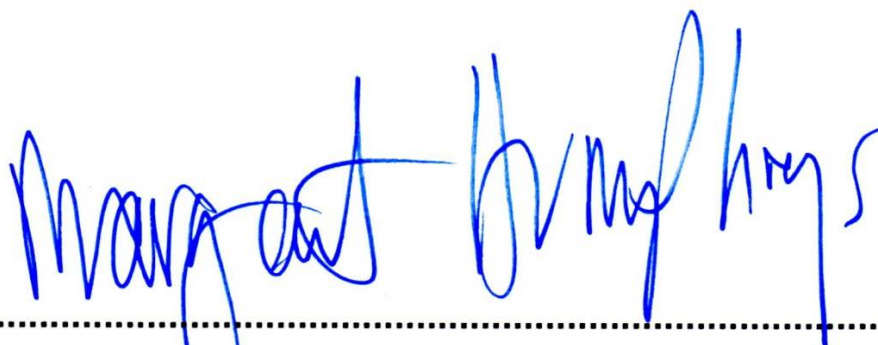
- 1.1. The Child Migrants Trust was founded in 1987 to provide a specialist, independent social work service to Britain's former Child Migrants and their families.
- 1.2. Britain's Child Migration policy spanned the Commonwealth, reaching Canada, Australia, Zimbabwe and New Zealand. The Child Migrants Trust has visited and worked in all of these locations.
- 1.3. My experience of working for and with former Child Migrants from Northern Ireland dates from 1988 when I first met several former Child Migrants who were sent to Perth, Western Australia. They were noticeably rooted in Ireland, yet disconnected. Their sense of identity was confused and fragmented - lost to their families and lost to their Homeland.

The BAFTA nominated documentary 'Lost Children of the Empire' (1989) featured ██████████ from Northern Ireland. ██████████ was sent as a ten year old boy to Australia in 1947 from Termonbacca, and his eventual reunion with his twin sister in Omagh was shared with the nation after a separation of 50 years. *"To be able to step off a plane, especially in the land where you were born, and to really know nothing about it. Everything was so strange to me. It was like my life starting all over again, but in reverse! I said, well, the first thing I will do, rain, snow or hail, is to go on my hands and knees and kiss the ground. And I did."*

Sadly, ██████████ died in 1996. His ashes were returned to his family in Northern Ireland.

- 1.4. The report has used historical records and the Child Migrants Trust's own files as source material. We have sought external evidence to support various aspects of the report, for example, the degree of parental consent to migration.
- 1.5. I have been assisted in the preparation of this report by two Assistant Directors, particularly by Ian Thwaites. Ian has worked intensively for almost twenty years with former Child Migrants from Northern Ireland who were sent to Australia.
- 1.6. It is matter of public record that former child Migrants were abused. These were the most exquisitely vulnerable of our young children both in the United Kingdom and Australia. Audrey Wise, a Member of Parliament on the Health Select Committee in 1998 visited Australia to hear evidence from former Child Migrants, some from Northern Ireland. *"War Crimes without a war"* was her view. More recently during public hearings in Western Australia *"Crimes against humanity"* was seen as an appropriate description.
- 1.7. This report has not focused in detail on the physical, sexual and emotional abuse endured by former Child Migrants while placed in institutions prior to their migration from Northern Ireland.

- 1.8. The N.I. Historical Institutional Abuse team has travelled to Australia to hear the testimony of those who suffered such horrific ordeals both in Northern Ireland and Australia. It is their voice - silenced for so long - which captures and conveys the awful facts of their ordeal and its long term consequences. *"I live with it every day of my life"* (former Child Migrant [REDACTED]).
- 1.9. 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."*
- 1.10. Four former Child Migrants born in Northern Ireland flew to London to meet with the Prime Minister in Westminster on the day. Northern Ireland Members of Parliament also supported the nation's apology in the House of Commons. Members for South Antrim and Foyle commended the Apology and lent their support: *"It is a shameful part of our history, and we ought to make the apology with deep humility."* (Dr William McCrea, DUP, South Antrim).
- 1.11. *"The Prime Minister will be aware that it was not just those children who were transported who suffered isolation, abuse and lies; many of their siblings left at home all too often experienced cruel care as well. Recently, many of them have come forward and had difficulty being received and believed. Their difficulty now is believing what they are being told: that there are no records available to settle their concerns, suspicions or beliefs that they have siblings in Australia and elsewhere."* (Mark Durkan, SDLP, Foyle)



**Margaret Humphreys CBE, OAM**  
**International Director, Child Migrants Trust**

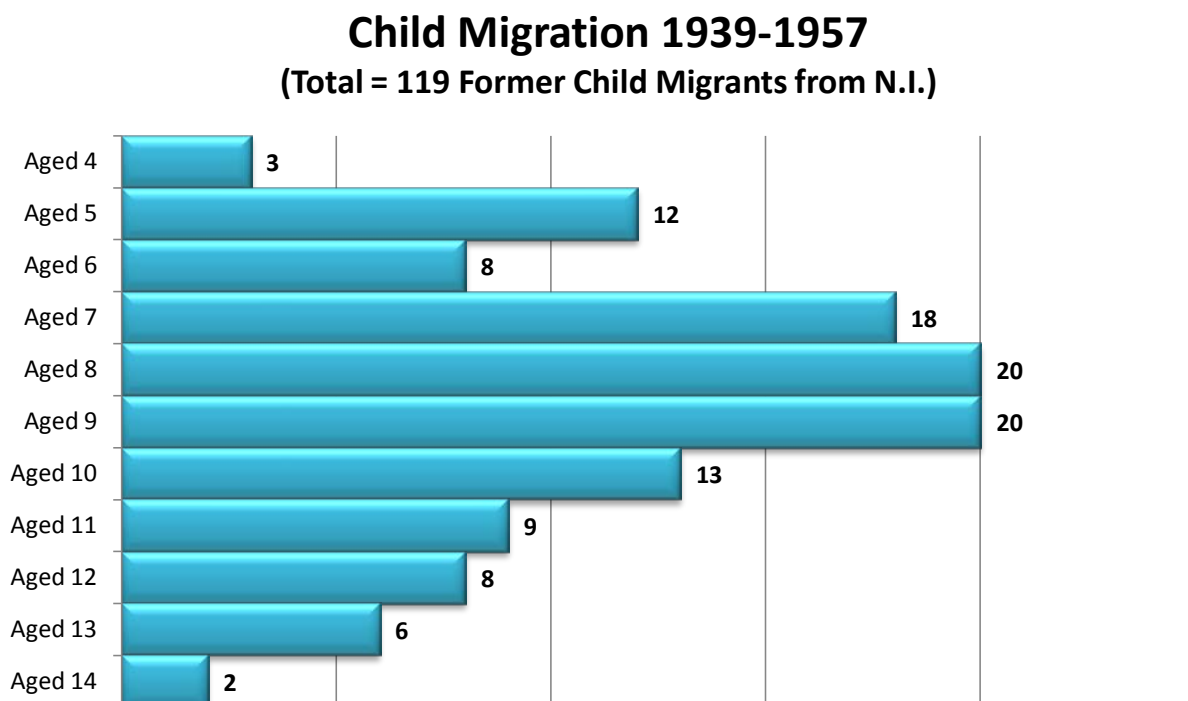
**24th July 2014**

## 2. Timescale & institutions - Northern Ireland child migration

- 2.1. Child migration from Northern Ireland involved approximately 120 children and was primarily a post war policy. Usually it was arranged through the Sisters of Nazareth rather than the broad range of voluntary agencies working across the United Kingdom, such as Barnardos and Fairbridge. The only other significant agency known to be involved in Northern Irish child migration was the Presbyterian Church which sent a group of children to Victoria in 1950.
- 2.2. Children were sent from the following institutions from 1939 - 1957:

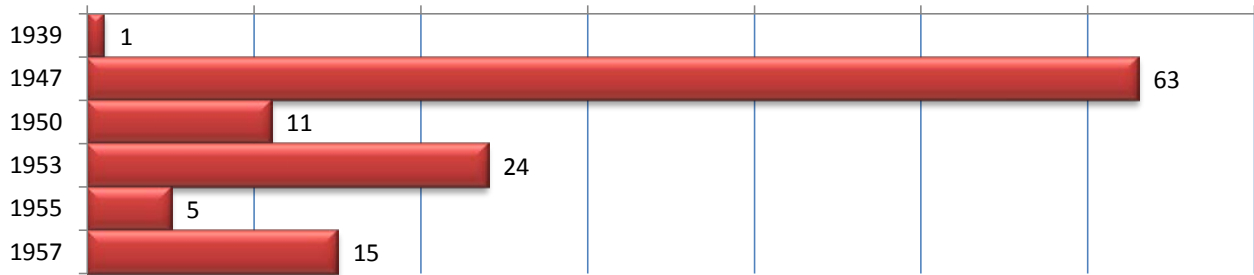
Co. Londonderry Children's Home	<b>1</b>
Local authority	<b>2</b>
Manor House Lisburn	<b>7</b>
Nazareth House Belfast	<b>22</b>
Nazareth House Londonderry	<b>13</b>
Nazareth Lodge Belfast	<b>26</b>
St Joseph's Termonbacca, Londonderry	<b>48</b>
	<b>119</b>

- 2.3. The children's ages ranged from 4-14 years, but most were between 7-10 years old:



- 2.4. To our knowledge, only two children from local authority care are known to have been sent to Australia. They joined the group of Presbyterian children sent to Dhurringhile, Victoria in 1950.

Child Migration 1939-1957  
(Total = 119 Former Child Migrants from N.I.)



Regarding the Northern Ireland Government's position on child migration from local authority care, a 1950 letter from Office of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in Canberra states the following:

***'Under the Children and Young Persons (Northern Ireland) Act, 1950, a Welfare Authority in Northern Ireland will be able to procure, or assist in the procuring the emigration of any child in their care, but where the child is capable of giving his consent, such consent will be necessary. Where the child is too young to form an opinion, he must emigrate in the company of a parent, guardian or relative, or must be emigrating to join a parent, guardian, relative or friend. In all cases the parent's consent must where practicable, be obtained and the approval of the Ministry of Home Affairs will be necessary in each case.'***

***We do not visualise that any child emigration on a large scale will take place from Northern Ireland and, therefore, the Northern Ireland Government prefer to leave it that any cases arising will be dealt with on their merits.'***

### 3. Institutional experiences in Northern Ireland

- 3.1. The lack of attachments or continuity of family life deprived children of the basic building blocks of identity and any context for developing a narrative about personal experience and events. In most families, milestones like the first day at school or individual achievements are usually marked by photographs, family stories and a steady reinforcement of growing identity, both as an individual and as part of a family. For child migrants in institutional care, it is unlikely anyone ever told them they looked just like grandma or they had a gift for drawing. Often the only information recorded on child migrants' files is sacramental information with the dates of their First Communion and Confirmation. Most remember the selection of their Confirmation name- an occasion that was valued by institutional staff and so positively reinforced to create memory. The bland, unchanging routine of institutional life with its emphasis on domination, fear and submission provides little stimulus for any development of a coherent narrative or sense of self.

- 3.2. 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, harmful consequences.
- 3.3. Those former child migrants with clear memories of their institutional experience in NI usually describe experiences of assault or other traumatic events, such as loss of family contact or punishments that were often perceived as particularly harsh or unjust.
- 3.4. There are some clear themes often reported that demonstrate abusive institutional practices in relation to fairly normal childhood issues, such as bed wetting. The consistent descriptions of highly punitive responses to children who disrupted the daily institutional routine is quite shocking. Children were severely punished and labelled as wilful and dirty. Bedwetting was usually perceived by institutional staff as a serious character flaw that merited beating and public humiliation. Another common response – the loss of whatever privileges children had in such a bleak setting - was a further damaging influence on vulnerable children, resulting in lifelong anxiety and loss of self-esteem for many former child migrants.
- 3.5. 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.'* Again there is a consistency in the detail of bullying and brutality, with an emphasis on the size and severity of the perpetrator from a young child's perspective. Children were beaten with straps, canes and fists. They were hit across the head or their ears, sometimes leading to injury and hearing loss. The pattern of assaults is 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.'*
- 3.6. Sexual assault in NI institutions is reported with sufficient frequency to suggest there was a culture of abuse. Often child migrants describe assaults by groups of older boys that took place in the dormitories or bathrooms with such regularity that it became part of the routine: *'He would just nod at me and I'd go down to the bathroom to get it over with. Sometimes I had to wait for half an hour or more.'* Sexual assault by adults is usually described as perpetrated by male staff or visiting workmen; however a religious Sister at a Belfast institution has also been identified as a perpetrator of sexual abuse against young boys.
- 3.7. The environment in institutions is usually described as alternately organised and ritualised or competitive and brutal. 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.'*

- 3.8. The lack of warmth and safety in NI institutions can be illustrated through consistent recollections of institutional practices such as bathing. Former child migrants describe large cold bathrooms and a race to get out as quickly as possible before the bath water turned grey. *'You never wanted to be the last one in – you came out dirtier than you started.'* 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.
- 3.9. Overall, the child-care experience in NI institutions effectively groomed and demoralised children for further assault, deprivation and exploitation in Australia. The lessons in total obedience and reduced expectation of fair treatment ensured a heightened level of vulnerability for the ordeal that awaited.

#### 4. Process of Selection

---

- 4.1. There are few records available to explain the selection of children for migration to Australia. The Trust has never seen an agency file for a child sent from Northern Ireland that documented the reasons for a decision, let alone considered the risks or alternatives. The narrative provided by the sending agencies is generally that children were believed to have better opportunities in Australia. Those institutionalised children who did not have strong family relationships in Northern Ireland were considered to be suitable candidates. The reality of the abusive treatment and low priority given to education belies this assertion. In addition, most children sent to Australia did have parents and extended families .
- 4.2. The Trust has worked with a child migrant sent to Australia in 1950 aged 8 by a local authority in N.I. His mother had died so, unusually, he was an orphan. However, he had two younger siblings whom the local authority placed with neighbours whilst he was migrated. In a few months, that child lost his mother, his brother and sister and all that was familiar. It was decades before the brothers and sister were reunited.
- 4.3. The separation of brothers and sisters through child migration was common practice. A group of four brothers and sisters from Belfast were sent to Australia separately over three journeys several years apart. 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 and they were unable to find one another for more than forty years.
- 4.4. The process of selection appears to been driven primarily by a need to fulfil quotas under pressure from British Catholic Rescue Societies in response to demand from the Australian Federal Catholic Immigration Committee, which at times became quite insistent, particularly as fewer children were available through the 1950s (supporting evidence available).



- 4.5. There are examples of brothers and sisters being split; for example, school age sisters remaining in Northern Ireland while their brothers were sent to Australia. Although separated into single sex institutions in NI, on occasions they visited one another and therefore their relationship was acknowledged, if not exactly nurtured. It is difficult to justify a decision to permanently separate brothers and sisters as serving the children's best interests if it was also motivated by a child migration policy that was struggling to find available children.
- 4.6. Some former child migrants recall being asked, usually in the classroom, 'Who would like to go to Australia?' *'A man all 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.'*
- 4.7. *'I remember when we were leaving Nazareth Lodge in Belfast. We were taken to Liverpool for the journey to Australia; I was 12 but I thought it was just for a holiday – I never knew we would never come back.'*
- 4.8. On arrival in Australia the children were further separated into institutions that largely ignored family relationships or childhood attachments, but divided them according to character and potential – for example, 'farming types' might be sent to Tardun, hundreds of miles away from a brother placed at Clontarf. These arbitrary decisions had disastrous consequences for many children who lost the remaining fragments of their family identity on arrival.



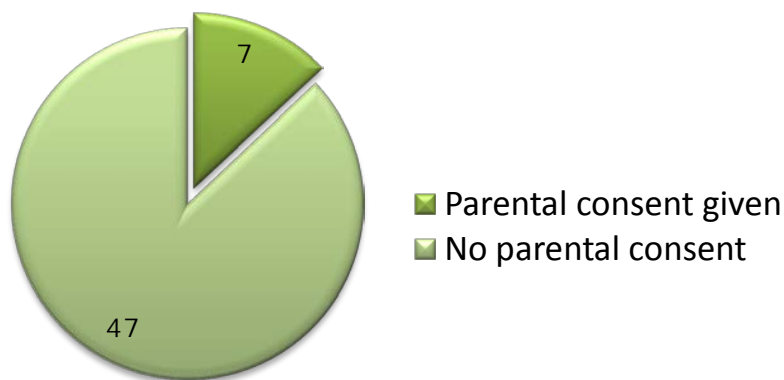
## 5. Parental knowledge and consent for migration

- 5.1. Child migration largely operated within a culture of deception. The Trust has interviewed several hundred former child migrants and their mothers and fathers over nearly three decades, exploring issues of separation from family including the degree of knowledge and consent for the migration of children.
- 5.2. Most Northern Ireland child migrants were sent from institutions rather than directly from their parents' care.
- 5.3. During the Trust's work with mothers of former child migrants, many have described difficult experiences in trying to visit their child placed within a Catholic institution. The following example set in the late 1940's is taken from a 1998 interview with an Irish mother:



*'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 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.'*

- 5.4. From the Trust's experience few Northern Irish parents gave written consent while the majority were not informed that their children had left the country. Many parents describe a similar deception to the example above – but were told their children had been adopted in the UK. Analysis of 54 Northern Ireland child migration forms shows the following:



- 5.5. Evidence of consent for each child is available within the child migration selection documents, which accompanied the children to Australia and are now held by the National Archives of Australia. The forms specify whether consent is given by a parent or a legal guardian, usually the Mother Superior of the institution.
- 5.6. It is not known whether the institutions made any effort to consult with parents prior to the migration of their children due to the limited paperwork for most former child migrants from Nazareth Houses. However, the common deception whereby parents were falsely told their children had been adopted suggests there was little regard for the parental rights of former child migrants.

## 6. Placements in Australia & summary of institutional care

- 6.1. Most children sent to Australia from Northern Ireland were placed in Catholic institutions run by the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of Nazareth or the Christian Brothers from the late 1930s until the late 1950s.

Northern Irish child migrants went to the following institutions in Australia:

- St Joseph's, Subiaco, Perth, Western Australia
- Nazareth House, Geraldton, Western Australia
- St Vincent's Orphanage, Castledare, Perth, Western Australia
- Clontarf Boys' Town, Perth, Western Australia
- St Joseph's Farm School, Bindoon, Western Australia
- St Mary's Agricultural School, Tardun, Western Australia
- Dhurrungile rural training farm, Tatura, Victoria
- Nazareth House, East Camberwell, Melbourne, Victoria

- 6.2. Three of these institutions were included in the Home Office 'Blacklist' following the 1956 Fact Finding Mission to Australia. This recommended that no children be sent until several improvements relating to quality of care issues were addressed. That advice was not fully implemented.
- 6.3. 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.
- 6.4. Sexual assault was commonplace at four institutions in Western Australia – Castledare, Clontarf, Tardun and Bindoon. For decades, the Trust has provided former child migrants with specialist counselling to address serious historical abuse and taken over a hundred victim impact statements detailing appalling accounts of criminal abuse. These matters are now being examined by the Australian Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse.
- 6.5. Most former child migrants describe their experience after arrival as a childhood of fear and deprivation; endless punishing labour, constant hunger and the ever present threat of predatory sexual assaults or brutal attacks by bullying adults. It is difficult to overstate the depravity of the institutional culture, particularly in the West Australian institutions for boys where there is growing evidence of organised paedophile rings. Several children died, apparently as a result of accidents, some related to unsafe working practices or medical neglect.
- 6.6. Despite the high levels of serious criminal assaults, the conviction rate of perpetrators is very low. Only one perpetrator has received a custodial sentence in the early 90s, 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.

- 6.7. Some former child migrants from Northern Ireland describe being scapegoated and bullied for their accent and origins, particularly by English nuns - just as English children suffered discrimination by Irish staff.
- 6.8. The children frequently remained attached to friends from their original institution. Those relationships continue today.
- 6.9. 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 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.
- 6.10. 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, and the 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.
- 6.11. The lack of any personal documentation or proof of identity was for many 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.

## 7. Access to records

---

- 7.1. Access to records has been one of the critical issues for former child migrants, with detrimental consequences for decades. Very few or limited records accompanied the children to Australia. Even then, they struggled to obtain the few details provided, given the resistance of both government and faith based agencies to enable access to even the most basic information such as their birth certificate.
- 7.2. Whether to reduce costs or to limit vital details to the minimum, agencies only sent short birth certificates with child migrants to Australia. Therefore, they did not even know their parents' names. If this was an attempt to protect some children from the stigma of illegitimacy, it was undermined by institutional staff regularly using derogatory references to illegitimacy when speaking to or shouting at former child migrants. *"You are the sons of Irish whores"* (former Child Migrant [REDACTED]).

- 7.3. In relation to former child migrants from Northern Ireland, few if any of the children were accompanied by detailed information regarding their family background or the circumstances of their separation from parents. With only a short birth certificate available - often withheld for decades - and child migration selection papers filed in government archives, child migrants lacked the basic documents which most of us take for granted.
- 7.4. 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.
- 7.5. Records of personal and family identity are critical for a range of issues at key stages in the life cycle. A birth certificate is needed for citizenship and marriage and to obtain a driver's licence. It is a practical necessity. It is also the starting point for tracing family and restoring family relationships.
- 7.6. Many former child migrants have been helped by the Trust to discover their identity and to establish something as fundamental as their correct names, their date of birth and where they born. This information was frequently not given to them by institutional staff. For example, a former child migrant from Tardun told the Trust: *'One day I asked Brother XX: 'When is my birthday?' He stood in front of me and said 'Your name is HIA 307. Your birthday is [REDACTED].'* That child migrant lived for the next 40 years with the wrong birth date until CMT was able to provide his full birth certificate and his correct birthday.
- 7.7. In its early days, CMT encountered a resistant attitude from both government and faith based agencies in relation to the identification and retrieval of records. Most agencies appeared to have little notion of what they held nor any straightforward way to access it. 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.
- 7.8. 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.
- 7.9. However, the reality is that the Sisters' of Nazareth record keeping 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 critical information in the first place and a failure to appreciate the significance of records for former child migrants.

- 7.10. In most cases, the only information provided by the Sisters of Nazareth is the date of admission, the child's date of birth, sacramental information and the date of discharge to Australia. It is rare for a search to be resolved on the basis of information provided by the sending agency.
- 7.11. Records of birth, death and marriage are key elements of any search for missing family members. Until recent years, records from the General Register Office in Belfast were difficult to access and required a personal visit. Despite being funded by government to undertake searches to reunite former child migrants with their families, the Trust was unable to negotiate any easier access protocol with the GRO, even after the 1998 Health Select Committee Inquiry into the welfare of former child migrants.

## 8. Family tracing experiences – need for CMT services

---

- 8.1. Without basic personal identity information, the search for family is akin to looking for a needle in the 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. Recently, CMT reunited a former child migrant with his mother. Twenty years ago, his own research led him to purchase a death certificate for a woman of the same name, leading him on a false trail. Had he not approached the Trust regarding an unrelated matter, mother and son might never have met.
- 8.2. Prior to the establishment of the Child Migrants 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. In the late 80s and 1990s, many former child migrants' parents were still alive so there was a chance 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 their former child migrant relatives home.



- 8.3. Attitudes and practices of both official and faith based agencies regarding requests for records from former child migrants were often dismissive prior to the establishment of CMT.
- 8.4. The obstacles to former child migrants achieving a successful reunion with their families are numerous and complex. 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 told their mothers abandoned them at birth or were prostitutes.
- 8.5. Often they were told to be grateful they had been 'saved' from terrible families; that there was nothing for them back in the UK. The impact of such hurtful lies, for many, 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.
- 8.6. Many mothers interviewed by the Trust gave accounts of 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.
- 8.7. 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 contact details in the United States for him with the Catholic agency, that information was never given to her son who returned to the UK 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.
- 8.8. Practical barriers of living half a world away from home, with limited access to detailed, factual information, create major difficulties for most child migrants seeking to find their families without professional help.
- 8.9. 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. Where parents have died, their 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.



- 8.10. Family restoration work requires specialist, professional skills and knowledge to bring about meaningful, healing reunions with the potential to develop into sustainable, accepting relationships.
- 8.11. 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 historic 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. 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.
- 8.12. The Trust provides specialist, 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.

## 9. The impact of separation and trauma

---

- 9.1. The impact of loss of family and the trauma of institutional abuse for Northern Irish 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.
- 9.2. The institutions' 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 destruction of personal identity.
- 9.3. 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, the children helped to build their own institutions.
- 9.4. The following are direct quotes from the victim impact statements of child migrants from Northern Ireland.
  - 9.4.1. *'I arrived from Termonbacca in Northern Ireland as a 10 year old. I was small for my age having suffered rickets in Ireland and was a thin, nervous and vulnerable little boy. I clearly remember the fear and confusion that followed our landing at Fremantle. It was a nightmare. We were taken on the back of a truck from Fremantle to Clontarf. Our clothes and everything we had from home were taken from us. The only contact we had from anyone was from angry, shouting men.'*



- 9.4.2. *'I was eight years old, a very small and sensitive boy who cried easily and was quite unable to protect myself from bullies. I remember the heat, the flies and the smells when we arrived. It was overpowering and frightening. Never for a moment did I believe this was going to be a holiday. I missed home.'*
- 9.4.3. *'My suitcase, brought all the way from Belfast, was taken from me. My clothes were stripped off me. Barefoot, naked and sunburnt, I was given a pair of khaki shorts, a shirt and put to work. No underwear and, worse, no shoes; I had to walk barefoot on burning hot gravel. We were handed to some older boys who laughed at us as we struggled even to stand on the burning ground. I was terrified and in pain. This was a terrible start. It never improved.'*
- 9.4.4. *'My entire childhood in Australia was one episode of bullying after another. They nearly destroyed me. It was not just the physical assaults and degradation that damaged me. I remember craving affection and desperately, genuinely, trying to please the Brothers all the time - so they might treat me more kindly, or at least less cruelly. Instead, I was mocked, ridiculed, beaten and exploited.'*
- 9.4.5. *'I was beaten by the nuns so many times. They used a big stick like a curtain rod and swiped at my hands; if I flinched they would whack into my legs. I so often had bad bruising and welts from the stick... They used to come up from behind and box my ears; that was so painful hitting me across both ears with the flat of their hands; made me dizzy and sick with pain... I remember the nuns pulling my hair, dragging me by the hair and then another beating... They told me I was a lazy, stupid cow, just like my mother. I remember crying myself to sleep with the pain and loneliness of it all. My whole life has been so hard, I've always had to work long hours for very little money because I was only ever trained to do domestic cleaning. At 13 I was taken out of school, told I was 'too stupid to educate.' Even when I was very young they made me scrub the concrete floors on my hands and knees... My joints are so painful I can't kneel anymore and my back is terrible. My doctor says my body is just worn out from so much work and it all goes back to those cruel nuns.'*
- 9.4.6. *'I saw terrible things happening all around me. Particularly cruel and distressing was the treatment of children who wet their beds. They were made to sleep out on the open verandas, exposed to the freezing cold at night. They were beaten and humiliated. I vividly recall seeing them all standing naked, being hosed down with a high power stream of water – just little kids.'*
- 9.4.7. *'The constant threat of severe physical assault haunted me throughout my time there. I never felt safe, never slept easily, was permanently on alert. I was very jumpy and twitchy... You would all the time hear screaming and wailing as some poor sod was being flogged and tortured but there was nothing I could do to help them or myself.'*

9.4.8. *'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.'*

9.4.9. *'I left there barely literate; I could read but not really comprehend the meaning. So I could not express myself in writing and anything that looked official filled me with such anxiety that I would avoid dealing with it. I feel enormously resentful today - they stole my future along with my childhood. Constantly, I recall being told I was there because nobody wanted me. I was always being put down, told I was worthless.'*

9.4.10. *'Another time, I was walking down to the workshop and he called out, 'Come on over here, copper top, you, bluey' (I had red hair). I didn't know what he meant. He came after me and said: 'didn't you hear me? And then he belted me with a wooden batten used to fix roof tiles, four or five times, knocking me to the ground.'*

9.5. The prolonged, psychological damage from such devastating layers of loss and trauma is predictable, tragic and overwhelming. The abuse and deprivation is both severe and damaging. Indeed it was criminal, and requires investigation as an injustice to this day. Yet, generally, former child migrants have not adopted a victim mentality in later life; rather they sought wherever possible to blend in and conceal their past - which most could barely explain in any coherent narrative.

9.6. For decades, CMT has provided counselling and family restoration services to over a thousand former child migrants, most of whom have struggled with the following issues, either frequently or throughout their lives.

- Poor self-esteem and anxiety
- An overwhelming sense of abandonment and loss
- Inability to trust or build close relationships
- Literacy issues, limited job prospects and difficulties with officials and forms.
- Post-traumatic stress disorder, often involving nightmares and panic attacks.
- Relationship difficulties with partners, children and work colleagues
- Substance abuse issues relating to unresolved anger and stress
- A pervasive sense of pessimism and fear

- 9.7. The Trust's social work has developed around the need to establish a more accurate 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.

## 10. Importance of Independence – examples of flawed practice

---

- 10.1. 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.
- 10.2. 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 former child migrants' parents over the years have provided many examples of coercive, stigmatising or dishonest cultures within UK residential care providers during the 1940s and 50s.
- 10.3. Given the high levels of historic 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.
- 10.4. 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. Unfortunately, many agencies with a history of involvement in child migration ignore this principle 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.
- 10.5. Although agencies assume that 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.
- 10.6. 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.

- 10.7. The Trust has encountered much poor practice by the migrating agencies, their successors and funded agents in recent times. 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 invited to Northern Ireland and taken to his mother by the same nuns, who stayed in the room during this first meeting with her in over 60 years. In the words of the former child migrant: *'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.'*
- 10.8. 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 able 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.
- 10.9. Similarly, CMT was working with a group of brothers and sisters who were sent to Australia from Northern Ireland in the 1950s and approached an agency in Belfast to retrieve records to assist the family research. Rather than passing information to the Trust, that agency identified the family and began working with them, making it very difficult for CMT to engage the family as a whole. Past poor practice with the children's mother was rationalised and defended, rather than confronted to ensure her experience was honoured and represented in that family's narrative of how they became lost to one another. The eventual reunion experience was compromised and fragmented, through the lack of a joined up approach and freedom from the migrating agency's interests.
- 10.10. 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.

## 11. Research complexities

---

- 11.1. Searching for families in Northern Ireland is rarely straightforward due to basic difficulties that defy easy solutions.
- 11.2. Firstly, record keeping by agencies in Northern Ireland, principally the sisters of Nazareth, was minimalist to the point of negligence. It is not simply a matter of lower standards in a less enlightened time; other Catholic agencies in the 1940s and 50s maintained and preserved comprehensive records often including details of a child's care history, family context and occasionally photographs.
- 11.3. The Diocesan Rescue Societies hold varying standards of records but usually have some basic information relating to a child's admission to their care.
- 11.4. The Sisters of Nazareth do not appear to have kept individual children's files and certainly have not preserved records if they ever had them. There is rarely any information available besides the basic admission register, sacramental information and date of discharge. The Trust has never had access to any Nazareth House visitor's book, incident book or any other record that could reasonably be expected in the management of a large institution.
- 11.5. Secondly, as basic family records concerning births, deaths and marriages have not been available online, personal visits to Belfast are needed to undertake detailed family research.
- 11.6. Thirdly, both deceptive practices and lack of detail relating to identity and kinship result in former child migrants having very little concrete information to begin family research. These factors make the starting point for a family search in Northern Ireland very broad and general rather than focussed on easily identifiable families or geographical areas.
- 11.7. There are complexities in all family research where surnames are common and no home address is 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 the next steps after finding the child's birth certificate. Apart from a mother's name, there can be little else to help focus the search.
- 11.8. It was common practice for single Irish 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 from the risk of incarceration in one of the mother & baby homes where women in need of support were often ostracised and deprived of choices.
- 11.9. Baptismal records are not indexed nationally, but when located can sometimes include the name of a godparent who may be a relative.

- 11.10. Some government records, such as health 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, regardless of their relevance to a search for parents or other close family members.
- 11.11. 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 documented, such as the name of a putative father.
- 11.12. 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. In the late 1990's the Trust located the mother of a former child migrant from Derry living in Cyprus, although there were extended family members still living in Northern Ireland
- 11.13. When interviews with potential families identified have been completed but the outcome is inconclusive, modern technology such as DNA testing can sometimes resolve uncertainties. However, this can cost up to £500 for each DNA test.
- 11.14. 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 locating 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.
- 11.15. 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.
- 11.16. A mother who lost her child sixty years ago will rarely have spoken with subsequent children or friends about a painful period of her life that remains locked into complex grief. Being identified through a grandchild's Facebook page is unlikely to help her feel safe or face a painful past. This is particularly important in small rural communities. There, elderly people often feel vulnerable to local gossip and have a strong sense of family privacy, which includes protecting family members who are no longer alive.
- 11.17. CMT views family research as a specialist area which is as critical as counselling and reunion 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. It is not a task for volunteers nor an activity that can be delegated to local historians or agencies who may have previously played a part in the breakdown of family relationships.

## 12. Child migration across borders

---

- 12.1. 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 within the four countries; and the Trust understands that post war migration from Northern Ireland only related to Australia.
- 12.2. However, some children were sent across the border from the Irish Republic by the Sisters of Nazareth into Northern Ireland for the purposes of migration as the Republic had no formalised policy regarding child migration. In those cases, the Sisters of Nazareth appear to have operated within their religious network rather than within national borders. This seems to confirm how little attention was paid to child migrants' personal or family identities.

## 13. Generational needs and legacy issues

---

- 13.1. The legacy for sons and daughters of former child migrants - 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. Unlike many of their parents who are often 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.
- 13.2. 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.
- 13.3. 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. 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.
- 13.4. 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.



- 13.5. 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.
- 13.6. The effect on their parenting could predictably be significant. Many former child migrant describe 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.'*
- 13.7. 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.
- 13.8. There are many ethical issues that require careful consideration, given that the Trust has many detailed statements relating to historic 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.
- 13.9. The needs of former child migrants' children and grandchildren raise important issues for the Trust in terms of the preservation and access to historic records, photographs and oral and written testimony.
- 13.10. At present, there is 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. 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.

## 14. CMT reunions in Northern Ireland

---



- 14.1. From its earliest days, the Trust has worked in Northern Ireland to reunite former child migrants with their families.
- 14.2. 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.
- 14.3. 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 portrayals are often exploitative, overly sentimental or fail to challenge the often negative community views of mothers who were separated from their children.
- 14.4. 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.

14.5. For example, a former child migrant introduced to his aunt and cousins in Belfast 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 than cousins 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.'*



Northern Ireland Family Reunions

14.6. 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 historic abuse.

14.7. Following their family reunion, former child migrants often 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.



## 15. Social justice initiatives

- 15.1. Former child migrants sent from Northern Ireland 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.
- 15.2. Public awareness and understanding of child migration history and the difficulties experienced by former child migrants is more developed in Australia than in the United Kingdom. Much of this awareness has been developed either directly or indirectly as a result of the Trust's educational and media work.

- 15.3. For example, CMT co-authored a popular history book and featured in a full length documentary, 'Lost Children of the Empire' which was shown on Australian television in 1989, creating considerable national debate. This, in turn, was followed by an award winning TV mini-series, 'The Leaving of Liverpool', which dramatised the themes of the documentary for a popular audience. Around this period, the Trust made representations to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration in 1994 and secured agreement that former child migrants should not have to pay a fee if they wished to apply for Australian citizenship.
- 15.4. The Trust's services in Australia started in 1987 and its first office was opened in Melbourne in 1990 after receiving its first grant from the federal Government. A second office was opened in Perth in 1995. The grant was set at a minimum level so that only a single social worker could be employed at each office. Similarly, the Trust's UK funding in the early 90s was not only equally minimalist but was actually stopped for two consecutive years. This was the spur for 'Empty Cradles', which was published in 1994, the Trust's account of its struggles to achieve social justice for former child migrants.

#### **PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRIES:**

- 15.5. The UK government responded to a 1998 Health Select Committee inquiry into the welfare of former child migrants by establishing a £1million Travel Fund which enabled 450 former child migrants to visit their families overseas. Most trips involved those living in Australia meeting their family members across the UK. Better access to records, a database of all former child migrants known to voluntary agencies, enhanced funding for the work of the Trust and greater public awareness of child migration resulted from this Inquiry. Before this travel fund was established, CMT had reunited 14 former child migrants from Northern Ireland with their families at their own expense.
- 15.6. Despite the Australian Government's reluctance to hold a similar inquiry, a Senate Committee decided in 2000 to investigate child migration to Australia during the twentieth century. Its report – 'Lost Innocents: Righting the Record' – was published in August 2001. Some proposals were accepted by the Government – for example, a travel fund for child migrants sent to Australia was established for a three year period at double the cost of the UK version. This provided for almost 700 visits from 2002-5. However, there were no extra funds for the Trust despite the many additional demands created by the travel fund.
- 15.7. In addition, each State was given a grant to erect appropriate memorials to former Child Migrants. Thus, in Western Australia, a statue depicting two child migrants holding suitcases was positioned near the Maritime Museum in Fremantle.



- 15.8. In June, 2009 the Senate reported on a review of the implementation of the 'Lost Innocents' recommendations. In its submission, the Trust argued that some had only been implemented in a half hearted way while others were rejected.

**NATIONAL APOLOGIES:**

- 15.9. For example, there had not been a government apology offered to former child migrants despite 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. Exhibitions at national museums were also financed after the Apology with tours to major cities in Australia.
- 15.10. 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 flexible support for reunion travel which allows at least two visits by former child migrants. So far, the FRF has been operating for four years and has financed over 720 visits. A total of 55 former child migrants (including sixteen women) from Northern Ireland have used the fund, just over half of those who remain from this group.
- 15.11. The FRF has enough funds to continue until next year when its future will be reviewed. It has been seen as a very positive measure by the child migrant community. The FRF is managed by the Trust according to guidelines agreed with the Department of Health. It is available to all former child migrants across the world with provisions to allow carers to accompany those with disabilities.

**REDRESS:**

- 15.12. One of the first forms of redress involved a class action which 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 boys sent from Northern Ireland, were awarded amounts which ranged from about £1000 to £12,500 for the most serious cases. The Brothers also issued an apology in 1993.
- 15.13. There was also a State redress scheme in Western Australia with the most serious forms of abuse being awarded around £22,500 although this was a significant reduction on the amount announced when the scheme was established in 2007.

- 15.14. There has been no similar provision for redress by the State of Victoria where a smaller group of former child migrants were sent nor any provision in terms of a faith based scheme. However, there is much evidence that such provision would meet a definite need.
- 15.15. There has been a faith based form of redress organised by the Catholic Church in Australia which has been the subject of several concerns about due process raised with the present Royal Commission in Australia. The amounts paid through this scheme are certainly less than those awarded by the WA scheme.
- 15.16. Neither the UK nor the Australian Governments have included financial redress as part of their package of support to former child migrants. Consequently, redress provision is rather like a patchwork quilt. It lacks a common pattern and differs according to where you were sent and which agency arranged your migration. Some of those severely abused in Victoria have had no local redress while Catholic children sent to Western Australia had two options.

## 16. What is needed now?

---

- 16.1. 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.
- 16.2. The majority of former child migrants have now been reunited with their families, though many still have missing relatives – they may have found their mother's family but lack information regarding their father's family.
- 16.3. The following measures are important strands of a strategy to promote recovery and well-being for Northern Ireland's child migrants and their families:
- Consideration of redress measures that acknowledge the scale of harm and loss arising from child migration. It is clear that 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.
  - Continued funding of independent, specialist professional services to trace and reunite families.

- The present management of records lacks the organisation and urgency which is vital to the welfare of former Child Migrants and their families. Centralisation of historic records within a government department with a clear access protocol is therefore essential.
- Better, more streamlined access to NI birth, death and marriage records for government funded independent professional agencies to assist former child migrants searching for their families.
- Measures to support the spirit of the 2010 National Apology to former child migrants, including practical and cultural initiatives that reinforce the lessons learned from a past which has been denied for too long.
- Continued funding of the British Government Family Restoration Fund to ensure those who find their families have assistance to undertake international reunion travel, for as long as it is needed.
- Legislation to ensure ethical independent practice that does not compound the original damage through intervention by past service providers or perpetrators of historic abuse.



## 17. Appendix 1 – HIA 307 Case Study & Timeline

---

- 17.1. HIA 307 never met his mother. Sent from Termonbacca to Australia in 1947 aged ten, HIA 307 began the search for his mother soon after he left institutional care in the 1950s. He tried nearly every possible way of finding her and never gave up.
- 17.2. By the time HIA 307 approached the Trust for help in the early 1990s, he had returned to Ireland twice, visiting Termonbacca and Nazareth Houses in Derry and Sligo where he had spent his early childhood. Apart from his certificate of baptism, he received no information to help him find his family.
- 17.3. The Trust had few details at the start of the search. Over fifteen years, thousands of pounds were spent buying certificates and travelling to interview dozens of potential family members across the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic. On three occasions, families who matched the research profile could not be excluded but DNA tests proved negative.
- 17.4. Just before the search was finally and unexpectedly resolved, the researchers found a woman who had moved to California and had recently died. CMT was actively negotiating with U.S. authorities to exhume the body for further tests to determine if she was HIA 307 mother. This drastic measure was clearly an ethical minefield and an indication of the vital importance of the search to HIA 307. The Trust grappled with the dilemmas of disrupting the mortal remains of an elderly woman who, in the event, was not the person we were so desperately seeking.
- 17.5. The answer to the search had been at Nazareth House all the time.
- 17.6. The Trust, with HIA 307, had visited Nazareth House Sligo three times, seeking documentation or any other possible sources of information, including interviewing elderly Sisters. The result was the same every time – no information. In 2008, HIA 307 visited Nazareth House again, this time on his own. He left with a photocopy of a sheet of paper that gave the details of the parish priest who had recommended HIA 307 original admission. HIA 307 gave that paper to the Trust and it was decided that a CMT social worker would return to Nazareth House to explore if any other information had been found.
- 17.7. The Trust visited Nazareth House to request sight of the document that had been photocopied for HIA 307. After more than three hours waiting, the paper giving the name of the recommending priest was finally produced.
- 17.8. **The other side of that document revealed the name and address of HIA 307 mother; details withheld from HIA 307.**

- 17.9. Investigation quickly established that HIA 307 mother had never married or moved from the home where she was born in 1912 and been a much loved sister, aunt and great-aunt to a large family. She had died in 1999, many years after HIA 307 and the Trust had requested information from the Church, more than forty years after HIA 307 began his search. Whilst the Trust was searching for her, requesting records from Nazareth Houses, HIA 307 mother had been still living at the family farm in County Fermanagh.
- 17.10. The response, or the lack of response, from different Catholic agencies meant this mother never met her son, her grandchildren or her great grandchildren. The costs and consequences were massive and intensified the pain and suffering of HIA 307 and his mother. It meant that dozens of families were needlessly investigated and disrupted; some generously agreeing to participate with intrusive DNA testing and re-examine their own family history in the context of a possible missing child. A recently deceased, devout Irish woman in America was almost disinterred. It is difficult to find words which adequately convey the pain and suffering involved.
- 17.11. This was not an example from the distant past. This took place in 2008, at the time of the Ryan Inquiry in Ireland.

## HIA 307 Timeline

Year	Date	Event
1937		HIA 307 born in [REDACTED], Co. Monaghan to [REDACTED]
	28/04/1937	Baptised in Castleblayney
	13/05/1937	According to Castleblayney hospital register HIA 307 was discharged and admitted to Nazareth House, Derry
1939	19/03/1939	Admitted to Nazareth House, Sligo – recommended by Mother [REDACTED], Nazareth House, Derry
1947	07/05/1947	Authorisation for migration documents signed by Brother P.A. Conlon, for and on behalf of the Scottish Migration Secretary
	29/08/1947	Migrated from Termonbacca on the 'Asturius'
	22/09/1947	Arrived in Fremantle aboard the 'Asturius'
1965		HIA 307 contacted a Catholic agency to help find his family - he was told he has no living family members
1992	19/05/1992	First contact with CMT
1993	22/05/1994	HIA 307 was interviewed by Margaret Humphreys in Perth, Western Australia

# HIA 307 Timeline

Year	Date	Event
1994		CMT conducts extensive research this year covering 8 [REDACTED] – all excluded. Baptismal sponsor also investigated.
	09/05/1994	Letters to Australian Archives and the West Australian State Government
1996	24/09/1996	CMT wrote to St Mary's Hospital, Castleblayney, Nazareth Houses and the Family Care Society in Belfast requesting urgent assistance.
	24/09/1996	CMT wrote to NE Health Board - they suggested we write to the Registrar in Co. Monaghan
	26/09/1996	CMT wrote to the Registrar in Co. Monaghan
1997	<b>30/07/1997</b>	<b>HIA 307 flew to Belfast with Margaret Humphreys</b>
	31/07/1997	Visited Nazareth House, Sligo
	31/07/1997	Met with Matron, St Mary's Hospital, Castleblayney. Their register cites "[REDACTED]" - with another surname crossed out. Also states 25 years old.
	05/08/1997	CMT located and excluded [REDACTED] in Enniskillen
	10/12/1997	CMT wrote to Catholic Enquiry Service, Edinburgh
1999	<b>[REDACTED]/05/1999</b>	<b>HIA 307 mother, [REDACTED] dies in Tyrone County Hospital</b>
	16/06/1999	Met with Hon. Dr Mal Washer MP in Joondalup to discuss difficulties searching for his family
	09/08/1999	HIA 307 visited Ireland and made enquiries with Castleblayney Hospital, who confirm [REDACTED] as the correct name
	23/08/1999	CMT research visit - 85 possible births and 27 possible marriages located for [REDACTED]
2000	21/10/2000	DNA tests conducted on daughter of a [REDACTED] prove negative
2001	05/03/2001	CMT met with family in Belleek
	25/04/2001	DNA testing conducted of family in Belleek - results prove negative
	26/05/2001	HIA 307 visited Ireland
	26/06/2001	HIA 307 arrived in Nottingham
	06/07/2001	HIA 307 wrote to Bertie Ahern T.D.

# HIA 307 Timeline

Year	Date	Event
2001	20/12/2001	Response from Mary Hanafin T.D. Referring to 'adoption' throughout
2002	07/06/2002	Solicitor's letters to Dept of Health and Children in Dublin re. lack of records
	12/11/2002	CMT arranged a case conference with NE Health Board in Drogheda
	11/12/2002	CMT contacted priest in Belleek who is trying to determine whether Nazareth House Derry & Sligo have further information
2003	07/01/2003	CMT called a case conference held in Dublin PJM's Solicitors, NE Health Board, Child Care Legislation Unit DoH, St Mary's Hospital Administrator, Castleblayney and CMT
	17/04/2003	St Mary's Hospital provide copy of 'Unmarried Mothers Admitted' returns showing [REDACTED] aged 25, admitted on [REDACTED]/37 - only child HIA 307 [REDACTED]
	19/05/2003	HIA 307 met with NE Health Board in Ireland
	04/06/2003	CMT liaise with NE Health Board regarding others admitted to Castleblayney in 1937
	24/06/2003	HIA 307 wrote to the Registrar General in Dublin requesting an inquiry into his birth registration
	24/06/2003	HIA 307 wrote to Enda Kenny, Fine Gael Leader in Dublin
	22/10/2003	Response from Registrar General - making enquiries with Castleblayney
	07/11/2003	Response from GRO - no further information is available
2004	27/01/2004	CMT research visit to Belfast
	21/03/2004	CMT visit to Enniskillen to meet family of [REDACTED] of San Francisco
	31/03/2004	CMT visit to Belleek to meet possible family
	10/11/2004	DNA testing conducted in Belleek proves negative
2005	17/03/2005	Residential Institutions Redress Board offer accepted
2007	03/09/2007	CMT met with HIA 307 and discussed possible exhumation for DNA testing of [REDACTED] in San Francisco

# HIA 307 Timeline

Year	Date	Event
2008	12/06/2008	HIA 307 visited Nazareth House, Sligo and was given a 1937 paper with new information - 'recommended by Fr. Connolly CC, [REDACTED]' - which focuses the search in [REDACTED]
	11/11/2008	CMT visited Nazareth House, Sligo and was given the same piece of paper which was handed to HIA 307. This paper had HIA 307 mother's address on the reverse. [REDACTED] remained at this same address from birth until her death in 1999
2009	16/04/2009	HIA 307 was reunited with his family in [REDACTED]
2013		HIA 307 visited Ireland for the wedding of his niece - the first family wedding he has attended. The family farm has changed little - the family have lived there for generations.
		HIA 307 walks the lane alone in the early morning – <i>“Walking in the steps of my Mother. Walking where my grand-parents and mother placed their feet. They walked this lane for years. It’s as close as I can get.”</i>