

families for so long. The experience of the former child migrants over the last 30 years is a tragic example of how the government has failed those who have been sexually and physically abused. There is an opportunity for this government to stand up, lead the way and make a change to ensure justice for those who have suffered childhood abuse.

77. To do this UK government needs to:

- i) acknowledge full responsibility for their failures and for the consequent horrific abuse suffered by child migrants, including - *but not restricted to* - those who suffered sexual abuse;
- ii) learn the lessons from child migration in relation to child welfare and protection against abuse. I **attach at Exhibit MH80** some of these lessons that I have drawn from the 30 years of working with child migrants and investigating the history of their experiences.
- iii) do the right thing by mobilising *without further delay* a post-Apology strategy based on the nine principles set out in my first statement and in a way that recognises that the needs of former child migrants and their families will exist for decades to come.

78. Finally, for my part, the disclosure process has revealed some very disturbing – albeit sadly not entirely surprising – material about attitudes towards the CMT in general and to me in particular. These attitudes have clearly had a significantly detrimental impact on the timely development and delivery of much-needed support for former child migrants and their families.

79. Whatever my personal failings may be, the facts are that government has been in denial for most of two decades about both their pivotal role in child migration and their responsibilities for making good (as far as it is possible to make good on the abuse child migrants suffered) for their failures to safeguard thousands of children from the age of three upwards.

80. It is my belief that the comments revealed by the disclosure process are a manifestation of the defensive mindset that has pervaded the response to a succession of policy disasters uncovered over recent decades. One example that immediately comes to mind in addition to child migration is Hillsborough.

81. It is also my belief that we must find a different way forward where the default heading on the briefing to Ministers ceases to be “Resist”, backed up by evasive lines to take and responses based on denial. Instead we need to move to a world where the response is built on a foundation of words like “empathy”, “support”, “listen”, “investigate”, “learn”, and “respond”.

82. Over the years I have heard many suggestions for what it might take to bring about this transformation. These include the appointment of special commissions or of czars, and of dedicated Ministerial roles, ring-fenced contingency funds and the like. But I resist the temptation of leaping to the conclusion that organisational or budget adjustments alone will bring about the fundamental cultural change that is urgently required.