

the agencies that families are not prepared to accept, rather than their child migrant relatives.

66. Whilst some voluntary organisations do recognise the importance of independence in matters of historic abuse, the Trust's view is that legislation is necessary to enshrine the unarguable right of individuals to choose independently provided therapy. This will assist in reducing the risk of further damage and lost opportunities through secondary abuse.
67. I would also like to draw the Inquiry's attention to the recommendations of the NI HIA, where the Report recommended the creation of a post called the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse. At paragraph 16 of the Report, it states that "The Commissioner (who should be assisted by the necessary staff) should be entirely independent of government and the organisations that ran the institutions, but should be funded by the government." This statement underlines the need for independent support.

Access to Records

68. Issues relating to accessing historic records have been flashpoints for many former child migrants over the years. The CMT has consistently raised the importance of records for former child migrants. Our submission to the House of Commons Health Committee stated as follows:

A key dimension of the Trust's philosophy is that former Child Migrants should enjoy equality of opportunity in terms of their knowledge of both themselves and their family background. Unlike the majority of the population, who take these issues for granted, many former Child Migrants have never had a full birth certificate and do not know where they were born or even whether their parents are alive or dead. It is clearly essential that former Child Migrants have access to this type of information as soon as possible.

69. The failure to provide the children with basic records and information has had an adverse impact on the most basic transactions in adult life, such as obtaining a driving licence or passport. Many former child migrants report tortuously complicated dealings trying to navigate the world of government systems without basic documents of identity. This is particularly difficult in today's climate of heightened awareness of identity and security requirements and is often the pathway of new referrals to CMT. This deprivation of identity and personal records is a harm common to all child migrants, including those who have been sexually abused.
70. The Inquiry has heard this evidence from the former child migrants who gave evidence, and has also received written documentation confirming a similar set of circumstances in New Zealand.⁴³
71. The importance of the records for a child's identity is closely linked to the dominant need and hope of many former Child Migrants to be reunited with their families. This was recognized by the Health Select Committee which recommended:

⁴³ ROL000003.