

Recovery through therapeutic services requires safety and trust. For most people, that will require distance from any connection with the perpetrator, their affiliated institution or successor agency. It requires therapeutic independence, the assurance that there are no vested interests to defend the perpetrators or their reputation. One does not usually return to the perpetrator of criminal abuse for counselling and support, though you may wish to pursue justice and accountability.

60. CMT has frequently heard complaints from child migrants about contemporary interactions with the institutions that were distressing, sometimes to the point of triggering their childhood trauma. The common themes are powerlessness, disrespect and indifference or denial.

61. The impact of secondary abuse can include:

- Re-activating trauma related to historic authoritarian, exploitative or abusive relationships;
- Reinforcing a sense of powerlessness and despair;
- Triggering feelings of rage that cannot be contained or safely expressed. These feelings often bleed into other interpersonal relationships with partners and children;
- Preventing or delaying former child migrants from seeking help, and ultimately losing the opportunity for recovery

### **Independence for therapeutic services**

62. From its inception, CMT recognised the vital need for independence in the provision of therapeutic services, given that some former child migrants have lost trust in government agencies or those organisations in whose care they were abused, exploited and neglected.

63. There appears to be a fundamental and persistent flaw in the reasoning of migrating agencies between having a responsibility to address past poor practices and the actual provision of those services. CMT recognises that former child migrants should have a choice in the service they need to help restore personal & family identity, or to address issues of historical childhood abuse. But I would assert that this needs to be informed choice with full disclosure of the potential risks of secondary abuse involved both for former child migrants and members of their family

64. There appears to be continuing resistance to the fundamental practice principle that recovery for survivors of historic abuse requires independent therapeutic services that promote trust and safety. Namely, service provision needs to be separate from perpetrators who abused their power and control over vulnerable children in a foreign country without family or friends to protect them.

65. Failure to recognise the need for independence where there is a past history of institutional abuse and deceptive practices is probably the most enduring form of secondary abuse. It has led to compromised or failed family reunions and sometimes a reinforcement of a pervasive sense of abandonment and rejection. Yet sometimes it is