

Migrants. At that time, a number of positive outcomes could have been achieved. There were solid grounds for a lot of hope. These were critical years when parents of child migrants were still very much alive. Yet, despite exhaustive efforts by the CMT, the IAFCM&F and others the UK government missed every opportunity over decades to acknowledge the truth about the child migration policy and provide effective support for former Child Migrants and their families.

124. A reluctance to listen and a refusal to take decisive action was demonstrated at all levels of government from Prime Minister downwards [MH53]. David Hinchliffe and other MPs raised numerous PMQs/PQs/Adjournment Debates etc. in Parliament on behalf of the CMT from the late 1980s onwards seeking secure and realistic levels of funding for supporting child migrants and their families [MH54 to MH58]. An All Party Group for British Child Migrants was even created as a result of CMT lobbying [MH59]. We and others on our behalf also wrote repeatedly to Ministers and officials about these issues [MH62 to MH68]. The Ministers involved included many household names of the period such as John Major, Tony Blair, Ken Clarke, Stephen Dorrell, Virginia Bottomley, John Patten, Tim Yeo and Margaret Hodge. As well as No.10 the UK Government Departments we dealt with included the Home Office, Dept for Health, the Foreign Office and Dept for Education and Skills.
125. We also prompted ongoing calls for an official UK inquiry into the policy and its consequences [MH60, MH61]. A myriad of untenable excuses were put forward for refusing the official inquiry that would have given the child migrants their opportunity to speak truth to power and also enabled lessons to be learnt that might have prevented subsequent abuses.
126. The reasons deployed for resisting our approaches are hopefully ones that, in hindsight, none of the key players will feel proud of, e.g.:
- “Any concern about the treatment of the children in another country is a matter for the authorities in that other country”* [MH69, MH58, MH70].
- “The government does not consider itself responsible for the proportionately small number of cases in which the scheme failed to live up to their objectives”* [MH68]
- “Child Migration was a policy formulated in a social climate very different from that of today”* [MH68].
- The CMT should be expected to “seek other funding sources” apart from government. [MH70].