



INDEPENDENT INQUIRY CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Deanna Neilson
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By email: Deanna.Neilson@actionforchildren.org.uk

2 January 2020

Dear Ms Neilson

Child Migration Programmes - Case Study Report - Follow up on Recommendations - Action for Children

As you will be aware, in March 2018 the Inquiry published its [Child Migration Programmes Investigation Report](#). The report set out the devastating abuse suffered by children sent abroad as part of the child migration programmes and the failings of institutions involved in sending those children abroad.

In response to the Inquiry's findings, the Chair and Panel addressed three recommendations to the institutions which were involved in sending children abroad. These recommendations were reiterated in the Inquiry's [Interim Report](#), published in April 2018, in which we asked institutions to publish details of the steps they will take in response, and the timetable involved, within six months of publication.

Of the recommendations made in relation to the child migration programmes, the following two recommendations apply to Action for Children, previously called the National Children's Home:

Recommendation 2: We are troubled by the amount of time it took successive British Governments to acknowledge the full responsibility of HMG for the fate of the child migrants. It has taken years for the former child migrants to have the truth of their experience recognised. This truth was clear from the Government's own documents, kept in the National Archives.

Through the national apology given in 2010, the evidence provided to the Inquiry and the apologies repeated before us, the British Government has now accepted the failings of the child migration programmes including in part with respect to the risk of sexual abuse. We do not consider it appropriate to recommend that they make any further acknowledgement of or apology for the failings that took place.



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However we do consider that implementing the Redress Scheme is an essential component of the British Government continuing to accept responsibility for the abuses suffered by child migrants, including sexual abuse.

As we have set out in the institution-specific sections of the report, some institutions have still not apologised for their role in the child migration programmes. We recommend that they do so, as soon as possible. We recommend that they make such apologies not only through public statements but specifically to those child migrants for whose migration they were responsible. (Child Migration Programmes Investigation Report, p.151)

Recommendation 3: As we have set out earlier in the report the Inquiry's ability to investigate allegations or evidence of sexual abuse within child migration programmes was hampered at times by the failure of some institutions, notably the Royal Overseas League and the Sisters of Nazareth, to have preserved the contemporaneous documentation.

The inability to access their records in a straightforward manner, or at all, has caused some child migrants yet further distress and an ongoing lack of clarity over their identity.

We therefore recommend that all institutions which sent children abroad as part of the child migration programmes should ensure that they have robust systems in place for retaining and preserving any remaining records that may contain information about individual child migrants, and should provide easy access to them.(Child Migration Programmes Investigation Report, p.151)

I am writing to you to request an update on the steps that Action for Children has taken to respond to these recommendations.

The Child Migration Programmes investigation report notes that apologies were made by Action for Children when the Inquiry was provided with evidence for the investigation hearing and that a constructive approach has been taken to provide support and reparations to former child migrants.

I would be grateful if you could provide an update on any further steps taken in response to this recommendation. In particular, I note the Chair and Panel's expectation that apologies are made not only through public statements but specifically to those child migrants for whose migration institutions were responsible.

Regarding recommendation 3, I note a free service for accessing records is offered on your [website](#). I would be grateful if you could provide an update on any further action that you have taken in response to this recommendation.



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I ask that you provide an update to the Inquiry within six weeks of the date of this letter. In addition, in line with the Chair and Panel's expectation that responses to the Inquiry's recommendations be [published](#), and in the interests of transparency and openness, I ask that you also publish that update.

Yours sincerely

Martin Smith
Solicitor to the Inquiry