

Victims of child migrant schemes given apology from Scottish Government.

The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry has moved on to its next stage, which focuses on those sent overseas by institutions entrusted to care for them.



Lady Smith chairs the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (Nick Mailer/PA)

By **Laura Paterson, PA Scotland**

December 3 2019 14:15 PM

The Scottish Government has apologised for the “suffering” of child migrants sent abroad by institutions entrusted to care for them.

Thousands of children from Scotland were sent overseas through child migration schemes that ran until 1971.

The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry has already heard evidence of sexual and physical abuse of former child migrants sent from Scotland to Australia and Canada – some of whom were falsely told they had no family.

The Scottish Government is extremely sorry for the suffering they experienced; Christine O'Neill QC

As the latest phase of the inquiry focusing on the child migration schemes opens, Christine O'Neill QC, representing the Scottish Government, said it "accepts and acknowledges the very particular role of the state" in the child migration programme.

She added: "The trauma, loneliness and despair of children who were sent abroad by their home country unaccompanied and separated from their families could not have occurred without state sanction.

"As Scotland's children they were entitled to the care and protection of the state, including public authorities in Scotland, who facilitated by active complicity or by turning a blind eye their migration and abuse.

"The Scottish Government is extremely sorry for the suffering they experienced."

Pointing out the devolved Scottish Government was not operational at the time of the schemes, she said it fully endorses a formal apology then-prime minister Gordon Brown made in Parliament in 2010 to child migrants and their families on behalf of the nation.

**£2.42
million**

Money paid to child migrant victims from Scotland via the UK Government redress scheme

UK Government

A legal representative for the UK Government highlighted Mr Brown's apology, which had cross-party support, and has been reiterated by subsequent prime ministers David Cameron and Theresa May.

She told the inquiry more than £30 million has been paid out to those subject to the migration scheme since UK Government redress payments came into force in March.

More than 1,500 people from across the UK have received the £20,000 payment, including 121 from Scotland, nearly half of the

estimated 254 eligible. It took the total paid out in Scotland to £2.42 million.

Stuart Gale QC, representing the Former Boys and Girls Abused of Quarriers' Homes, which sent more than 7,000 children from Scotland overseas mainly to work on farms, told the inquiry that following the setting up of the redress scheme some may question the need for further examination of child migration.

He referenced Prime Minister Boris Johnson's remarks that millions of pounds of police funding was being "spaffed up the wall" on historic abuse investigations and accused him of "staggering insensitivity".

Mr Gale said evidence taken and still to be given shows the need for their experience to be "formally recognised and investigated".

John Scott QC, representing the In Care Abuse Survivors group, said the children involved had "lost and scarred childhoods" and hopes this phase of the inquiry helps them "get some understanding of their childhoods and lives".

Colin MacAulay QC, senior counsel to the inquiry, said further evidence would be taken via video link from former child migrants living overseas on "emotional, sexual and physical abuse from people into whose care they were entrusted".

The inquiry also heard apologies from various organisations for their involvement in child migration from Scotland, including Quarriers, Christian Brothers, Sisters of Nazareth and Barnardo's. The inquiry, before Lady Smith, continues.

PA

By Taboola |