



Department
for International
Development



Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP
Secretary of State

[Organisation name]

Our ref:

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The shocking events uncovered in Haiti have shone a spotlight on the scandal of sexual exploitation and abuse in the aid sector. I know that efforts are already being made to tackle this issue, but clearly more work is needed.

I am determined that we do our utmost to prevent this, and other forms of exploitation and abuse, ever happening again. We cannot wait for others in the international community to act – we, the UK, must show leadership ourselves.

UK charities working overseas must step up and do more, so that we have absolute assurance that the moral leadership, the systems, the culture and the transparency that are needed to fully protect vulnerable people are in place, all of the time and wherever these charities work.

As International Development Secretary, and in providing UK Aid funds to your organisation, as part of the necessary due diligence framework, I am now asking you to provide me with that assurance. I am also asking you to confirm that you have referred any and all concerns your organisation may have on specific cases and individuals to the relevant authorities.

In seeking these assurances, I and my officials are working closely with the Charity Commission for England and Wales as well as the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland to ensure that we can have full confidence in the standards of safeguarding across the sector.

I am aware that in delivering international development, your organisation will work with a range of partners. Where you are a funder of those organisations, you must also have similar assurances. I remind you that the Charity Commission states that trustees should be satisfied that any partner organisation has in place adequate safeguarding arrangements, including appropriate policies and mechanisms to provide assurance on compliance.

Therefore, I am requesting your organisation provide me with a statement of assurance on the following four points which are essential to effective safeguarding:

1. That you provide a safe and trusted environment which safeguards anyone who your organisation has contact with, including beneficiaries, staff and volunteers
2. That you set an organisational culture that prioritises safeguarding, so that it is safe for those affected to come forward, and to report incidents and concerns with the assurance they will be handled sensitively and properly
3. That you have adequate safeguarding policies, procedures and measures to protect people and these are shared and understood
4. That you have absolute clarity as to how incidents and allegations will be handled should they arise, including reporting to the relevant authorities, such as the Commission and to funding partners such as my own Department.

You must also specifically confirm that you have referred any and all concerns your organisation may have on specific cases and individuals to the relevant authorities. Alongside the Charity Commission and its other UK counterparts, this should also include any authorities for which your organisation has a responsibility to report safeguarding issues to, specific to your area of work. In addition, you should refer concerns to relevant national authorities in countries where incidents occur.

Returns should cite or link to evidence where appropriate. They will need to reach DFID officials at safeguardingassurance@dfid.gov.uk no later than the 26th February. We suggest returns should be short, factual and to the point. We will share returns with the Charity Commission and other regulatory bodies in the United Kingdom. We will review those returns, follow up with individual organisations where needed and offer further views and guidance in due course.

DFID will be co-hosting a Safeguarding Summit in the coming weeks with the Charity Commission for England and Wales alongside other UK charity regulators, with a view to announcing a series of events later in the year. The purpose of this Summit is to agree a first set of actions that we will take to provide confidence in the staffing and safeguarding standards of the UK Charity sector.

Finally, I want to emphasise and re-affirm my appreciation of the incredible value and enormous good that your organisation and hundreds of others across the charitable sector do in the field of international development. I know how upsetting this incident will have been for all the excellent and dedicated staff in those organisations. It is precisely because of the value of those staff and of your organisations that we cannot allow the behaviour of a minority to undermine confidence in that excellent work. In order to re-build this confidence we need to ensure that a zero-tolerance approach means just that and that every incident is investigated and followed through.

Thank you for your attention on this crucial matter.

Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP

Secretary of State