

High Level Summary: Safeguarding Assurance Returns from UK Charities

Introduction

1. On 12 February 2018, the Secretary of State for International Development wrote to all UK charities directly receiving UK Aid requesting that they provide her by 26 February a statement of assurance on the following four points which are essential to effective safeguarding:
 - i. That they provide a safe and trusted environment which safeguards anyone who their organisation has contact with, including beneficiaries, staff and volunteers;
 - ii. That they 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 that they will be handled sensitively and properly;
 - iii. That they have adequate safeguarding policies, procedures and measures to protect people and these are shared and understood;
 - iv. That they 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 the Department for International Development.
2. We also asked them to confirm:
 - v. That they have referred any and all concerns their organisation may have on specific cases and individuals to the relevant authorities.
3. A copy of the letter was published on gov.uk ([Annex A](#)) and the list of the 179 UK charities we requested returns from is included at [Annex B](#). DFID is writing similar letters to other partners we fund (assurances have been requested from our top 30 suppliers including private sector organisations and all multilateral partners – lists at [Annexes C and D](#)). We have written to all suppliers asking them to review their safeguarding practices, and have requested returns from our top 30 as they account for over 80% of DFID's contractual spend.
4. The purpose of this exercise was to gain our partners' statements of assurance on safeguarding. Our ratings relate to the clarity of that assurance; this exercise does not represent an opinion on the quality of partners' safeguarding in practice. DFID sees this as an important step in a much wider drive to improve safeguarding standards across the whole sector. The roll out of new, enhanced and specific safeguarding standards in Due Diligence will be an important way to effect change.

Findings

5. Of the 179 charities we expected returns from, 158 met the 26 February deadline. 21 were late. We followed up with those 21 remaining and received all responses due. Reasons for late replies were primarily administrative.

6. A methodology to assess the clarity of organisations' assurance was developed and tested with external experts Keeping Children safe and Sheila Drew-Smith, appointed as an independent adviser to the Secretary of State. A dedicated DFID team within the new Safeguarding Unit rated the returns Red, Amber or Green according to the clarity of the statements of assurance.
7. Following the first assessment, as of 5 March, 143 organisations were rated Green, 37 rated Amber and 0 were rated Red. This meant that all organisations had given their assurances but some returns were less clear or complete than others.
8. DFID subsequently followed up with the 37 Amber-rated organisations. All have now given a clear statement of their assurance on their organisations' safeguarding environment and policies, organisational culture, transparency and their handling of allegations and incidents.
9. The Secretary of State for International Development shared at the Safeguarding Summit on 5 March some of the key trends and themes coming out of the returns.
10. Key areas of best practice include the following:
 - i. A designated safeguarding officer at governance and senior leadership level and across the organisation at various points.
 - ii. Publication of policies/procedures, including named high level responsible officers and due diligence processes and clarity on how they will be fully implemented, reported on, and with what due diligence processes. Some organisations in their whistleblowing policies had a no retaliation / no reprisal clause.
 - iii. Codes of conduct for staff and volunteers, highlighting acceptable ethical behaviour at work were used to ensure safeguarding and speaking up is part of everyone's responsibility and would be embedded in the culture.
 - iv. Provision of additional evidence on procedures and protocols to strengthen policies and practices such as reference to local, international and UK legislation.
 - v. Clarifying best practice on both staff and beneficiary engagement and role-modelling on how we can all do better.
 - vi. Use of capacity building and training, continuing professional development and induction as a means of being vigilant on safeguarding in a proactive manner. This also allowed organisations to embed a safeguarding culture.
 - vii. A few organisations refer specifically to whistleblowing policies; safeguarding training; UK legislation; sexual conduct (including children under 18 and those above 16). A few specifically refer to sexual harassment.
 - viii. The use of a 3rd party external helpline for staff, volunteers and beneficiaries to raise concerns. Then training all of the organisations people to ensure they are aware of the helpline, and how and when to raise concerns.
11. Key areas that we judged needed further attention included the need to see more evidence of:
 - i. Putting beneficiaries first.
 - ii. Demonstrating that survivors' well-being, dignity and support is a priority.

- iii. Addressing safeguarding as a core category in organisations risk management.
- iv. Ensuring full reporting and clear lines of responsibility. Very few organisations referenced senior individuals (either at Board or executive level) who are responsible for safeguarding. Going forward, we would expect to see designated safeguarding officers in place in organisations.
- v. Too many organisations were reporting zero or very few allegations in the returns. This could mean there is a lack of transparency, reporting is of a weak standard and/or there is limited understanding of safeguarding.
- vi. DFID had concerns about the number of organisations who did not refer to whistleblowing policies (55). The charity returns data suggest that where safeguarding and whistleblowing policies were present and being used it fostered an environment where reporting concerns were more likely and people had the opportunity to be able to speak up.
- vii. We need to see more being done for those staff who work on safeguarding in terms of regular support, access to training and supervision to ensure their well-being is cared for.

12. This informed the new Safeguarding Due Diligence measures announced on 5 March which will include 5 new areas that will need to be in place for all organisations, irrespective of size, to pass DFID's new enhanced and specific safeguarding assurance. These areas are:

- i. Safeguarding policy;
- ii. Whistleblowing;
- iii. Codes of conduct;
- iv. Risk management; and
- v. Oversight and accountability at a governance and senior leadership level.

Reporting of concerns

13. The returns generated allegations of specific cases. These were shared with the Charity Commission who confirmed on 5 March that 26 of the 179 organisations had made Serious Incident Reports to them covering some 80 allegations which had not been previously reported.

14. DFID judges that the increased reporting of allegations is a necessary and important step to driving up safeguarding standards. Anyone can report concerns, suspicions and/or allegations of fraud, sexual exploitation and abuse or other corrupt practices to DFID's dedicated secure email address via reportingconcerns@dfid.gov.uk.

Next steps

15. The UK and DFID's new Safeguarding Unit are working to drive up safeguarding standards across the international development sector. This includes contacting other partners we work with, rolling out new, enhanced and specific Due Diligence standards, taking forward actions arising from the 5 March Safeguarding Summit and hosting a larger Safeguarding Conference later this year.

Annex A - Letter sent to UK charities in receipt of DFID funding



Department
for International
Development



Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP
Secretary of State

[Organisation name]

12 February 2018

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

Annex B – List of UK charities working overseas from whom DFID requested statements of assurance on safeguarding

1. AATF
2. Absolute Return for Kids (ARK)
3. Action Against Hunger UK
4. Action Aid
5. ADD International
6. ADRA UK
7. Advocates for International Development
8. Aegis
9. Africa Educational Trust (AET)
10. African Revival
11. Afrikids
12. Aga Khan Foundation (United Kingdom) (AKF (UK))
13. Age International
14. Amnesty International
15. Ashden
16. BasicNeeds
17. BBC Media Action
18. Bees for Development
19. Bond
20. BRAC
21. British Academy
22. British Asian Trust
23. British Council
24. British Red Cross
25. Business in the Community
26. CAFOD
27. Camfed
28. CARE International UK
29. CBM UK
30. CDAC Network
31. Centre for Economic Policy Research
32. Centre for Global Education
33. Chatham House
34. Childhope
35. Children in Crisis
36. China Dialogue
37. Christian Aid
38. ClientEarth
39. ColaLife
40. Comic Relief
41. Concern Worldwide
42. Conciliation Resources
43. Construction Transparency
44. DEC
45. Development Initiatives'
46. Disability and Development Partners (DDP)
47. Doctors of the World UK
48. Dolma Foundation
49. Education Development Trust
50. Emergency Nutrition Network
51. Emms International
52. Energy 4 Impact
53. Energy Saving Trust
54. Environmental Investigation Agency
55. Ethical Trading Initiative
56. European Interagency Security Forum
57. Exeter Ethiopia Link
58. Fairtrade Foundation
59. Farm Africa
60. Feed the Minds
61. Fern
62. Forest Peoples Programme
63. Forum for the Future
64. Friends of Kipkelion
65. Galv Med
66. Gatsby Charitable Foundation
67. Global Canopy
68. Global Innovation Fund
69. Global Witness
70. Goal
71. Habitat for Humanity
72. Halo Trust
73. Hand in Hand International
74. Health Poverty Action
75. Helpage International
76. Hopes and Homes for Children
77. Humanity and Inclusion

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| 78. IDS | 119. Plan International |
| 79. IIED | 120. Power of Nutrition |
| 80. Imperial College London. | 121. Practical Action |
| 81. INASP | 122. Proforest |
| 82. INSO | 123. Project Everyone |
| 83. Interburns | 124. Project Harar |
| 84. International Alert | 125. Railway Children |
| 85. International Children's Trust | 126. Rainforest Foundation UK |
| 86. International Health partners UK | 127. Reall |
| 87. International Medical Corps | 128. RedR |
| 88. International Rescue Committee UK | 129. Relief International |
| 89. Internews | 130. Restless Development |
| 90. ISEALS | 131. Role UK |
| 91. Islamic Relief | 132. Saferworld |
| 92. Learning for Life | 133. Samaritan's Purse |
| 93. Leonard Cheshire | 134. Save the Children |
| 94. Lepra | 135. Sciaf |
| 95. Leprosy Mission | 136. Semta |
| 96. LHCF (LAMB HealthCare Foundation) | 137. Send a cow |
| 97. Link Community Development | 138. Sense International |
| 98. Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine | 139. Share Action |
| 99. London School of Hygiene & Tropical
Medicine | 140. Shell Foundation |
| 100. Loughborough University | 141. Sightsavers |
| 101. Lucy Faithful Foundation | 142. Solaraid |
| 102. MAG | 143. Sound Seekers |
| 103. Malaria Consortium | 144. SOAS |
| 104. MapAction | 145. Street Child |
| 105. Marie Stopes International | 146. TB Alert |
| 106. Mary's Meals | 147. Tearfund |
| 107. Mercy Corps Europe | 148. The MENTOR Initiative |
| 108. Medair UK | 149. The Queen Elizabeth Diamond
Jubilee Trust |
| 109. Mission Aviation Fellowship
International | 150. Thet |
| 110. Motivation Charitable Trust | 151. Timber Trade |
| 111. Muslim Aid | 152. Traffic International |
| 112. Opportunity International | 153. Traidcraft |
| 113. Orbis UK | 154. Transparency International |
| 114. Overseas Development Institute | 155. Trocaire |
| 115. Oxfam | 156. Twin |
| 116. GLOPAN | 157. UK-Med |
| 117. Pact UK | 158. UNESCO UK National Commission |
| 118. PEAs | 159. Unicef |
| | 160. United Purpose |

- 161. University of Birmingham
- 162. University of Greenwich
- 163. Varkey Foundation
- 164. Village Water
- 165. Viva
- 166. VSO
- 167. War Child
- 168. Water & Sanitation for the Urban
Poor (WSUP)
- 169. Water Works
- 170. Wateraid
- 171. Well Grounded
- 172. Wellbodi
- 173. Wellcome Trust
- 174. Womankind Worldwide
- 175. World Child Cancer
- 176. World Jewish Relief
- 177. World Vision UK
- 178. Y Care
- 179. Zoological Society of London
- 180.

Annex C – List of top 30 suppliers from whom DFID has requested statements of assurance on safeguarding

NB: 5 of our top 30 suppliers were included in the UK charities list, marked with an asterisk

1. Abt Associates
2. Adam Smith International Ltd
3. AECOM Professional Services
4. ATOS IT Services UK Ltd
5. British Council*
6. Cardno Emerging Markets (UK) LTD
7. Care International*
8. Coffey International Development Ltd
9. Crown Agents
10. DAI Europe
11. IMA World Health
12. IMC Worldwide Ltd.
13. IPA-International Procurement Agency (BV)
14. IPE Global Ltd.
15. KPMG
16. Mannion Daniels Limited
17. Maxwell Stamp Plc
18. McKinsey & Co, Inc UK
19. Mott Macdonald Ltd
20. Marie Stopes International (MSI)*
21. Options Consultancy Services Limited
22. Overseas Development Institute*
23. Oxford Policy Management
24. Palladium
25. Population Services International
26. Pricewaterhousecoopers
27. Sightsavers*
28. Voluntary Service Overseas*
29. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
30. Galliford Try Infrastructure Limited

Annex D – List of UN & multilateral organisations from whom DFID is requesting assurances on safeguarding

1. African Development Bank
2. Asian Development Bank
3. Caribbean Development Bank
4. Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management
5. Climate Investment Funds
6. Commonwealth Foundation
7. Commonwealth Secretariat
8. Commonwealth of Learning
9. European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Operations
10. Education Cannot Wait
11. EU Directorate General for International Co-operation and Development
12. European External Action Service
13. Food and Agriculture Organisation
14. Global Alliance for Vaccines
15. Global Green Growth Institute
16. Global Environment Facility
17. Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria
18. Global Partnership for Education
19. Green Climate Fund
20. Inter-American Development Bank
21. World Bank Group – IBRD, IDA, IFC, MIGA
22. International Committee of the Red Cross
23. International Federation of the Red Cross
24. International Fund for Agricultural Development
25. International Organisation for Migration
26. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
27. Pan American Health Organisation
28. Peace Building Fund
29. Private Infrastructure Development Group
30. UN Children’s Fund
31. Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children
32. UN Development Programme
33. UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
34. UN Department for Political Affairs
35. UN Population Fund
36. UN Refugee Agency
37. UN Women
38. UNAIDS
39. UNOPS
40. UNITAID
41. UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
42. World Food Programme
43. World Health Organisation