

News story: Statement from the International Development Secretary on Oxfam

On Friday 16 February International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

“I have now received a formal response to the set of demands I put to Oxfam in my meeting with Mark Goldring, Chief Executive, and Caroline Thomson, Chair of Trustees, on 12 February.

“I made three demands: that they make clear how they will handle any forthcoming allegations around safeguarding – historic or live; that they report staff members involved in this incident to their respective national governments; and that they fully cooperate with the Haitian authorities, including handing over all evidence they hold. Oxfam has now confirmed that they have complied with all of these points.

“Following our discussions, Oxfam has agreed to withdraw from bidding for any new UK Government funding until DFID is satisfied that they can meet the high standards we expect of our partners.

“My priority is to deliver for the world’s poorest and most vulnerable, while keeping people safe from harm. We want to ensure that programmes we are already financially committed to are being delivered appropriately by Oxfam or any other DFID partner.

“We have asked for assurances from all our charitable partners regarding their safeguarding and reporting practices by 26 February, including Oxfam. At that stage we will make further decisions about continuing or amending how those programmes are delivered. Our primary guiding principle in this will be the welfare of the beneficiaries of UK aid.

“The UK Government reserves the right to take whatever decisions about present or future funding to Oxfam, and any other organisation, that we deem necessary. We have been very clear that we will not work with any organisation that does not live up to the high standards on safeguarding and protection that we require.

“In taking these actions I am very aware that there are hundreds of good, brave and compassionate people working for Oxfam around the world. They have been poorly served by Oxfam’s leadership team too.

“Clearly Oxfam have a long way to go before they can regain the trust of the British public, their staff and the people they aim to help. The actions and attitude of the organisation over the coming weeks will be critical.

“I am determined that we do our utmost to prevent exploitation and abuse happening – and ensure that where it does happen it is identified and dealt

with appropriately.

“The UK will continue to take all necessary action and it is vital now that the whole aid sector – from UK-based charities working overseas, to the UN, to other donor countries – step up and demonstrate the leadership required.”