

UK aid funding open to Oxfam

Oxfam can once again bid for UK aid funding to carry out lifesaving work around the world, Minister for Development Andrew Mitchell announced today (Thursday 10 November).

A pause was put on the charity bidding for funding in 2021 while an external investigation was carried out into safeguarding allegations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Since then, the charity has made significant improvements to its safeguarding systems in DRC – this includes the appointment of a national safeguarding advisor, a new network of safeguarding experts who work across their offices and respond to concerns, and training for staff on how to report a concern.

These measures are all in addition to other actions taken by Oxfam since 2018 to improve their overall safeguarding approach.

UK Minister for Development Andrew Mitchell said:

Oxfam has made significant improvements to how it deals with safeguarding, including introducing more effective preventative measures.

However, we are not complacent. We want to encourage reporting and a robust but sensitive response in every case, ensuring more reporting and better responses to cases. All providers of aid must have practices in place to make sure that safeguarding is always put first and foremost in planning and operations.

In February 2018, the Charity Commission announced a statutory inquiry into Oxfam, following safeguarding allegations in Haiti. Oxfam voluntarily withdrew from bidding for new UK aid and the pause remained in place since, apart from a short period in 2021. Oxfam has since invested in and expanded its safeguarding function and increased oversight by appointing their first Ethics and Integrity Director to uphold standards across the organisation. It has also introduced mandatory safeguarding training for staff working around the world.

Since 2018 the UK has made huge progress in tackling abuse in the sector and used its convening power and funding to improve safeguarding standards, identify perpetrators and support survivors and victims.

This includes backing a tougher screening system, which allows charities to share data about staff misconduct and stop perpetrators moving from job-to-job, working with Interpol and the UK's ACRO Criminal Record Office on Project Soteria to improve criminal records checks and promote information sharing between aid and law enforcement agencies. It has also launched a £10 million [Resource and Support Hub](#) to support aid organisations operating on

the ground to improve their safeguarding standards.