



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

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Sarah Champion MP
Chair
International Development Committee
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

9 September 2020

Dear Sarah,

I am writing to inform you of my decision to normalise HM Government's ODA funding relationship with Save the Children. Save the Children UK voluntarily withdrew from bidding for new UK ODA funds in 2018 until HMG was satisfied that they could meet the high safeguarding standards we expect of our partners. New funding has been agreed by exception in several humanitarian emergencies, including in response to COVID-19, in order to ensure life-saving aid reached those who needed it and that we put people who receive aid first.

The government's objective in considering the funding relationship with Save the Children UK has been to ensure we have rigorous evidence that people who receive UK aid and aid workers will be protected from sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH). The Charity Commission's Statutory Inquiry report, published on 4 March 2020, criticised Save the Children UK for mismanaging complaints of inappropriate conduct made by employees in 2012 and 2015 against two senior staff members. It praised Save the Children UK's internal handling of complaints made in 2018 against the Director of Policy but criticised the tone and content of some of their media statements in April 2018. We have taken this criticism very seriously and worked with Save the Children UK to ensure we are satisfied that appropriate actions have been taken by the charity before considering normalisation of the relationship.

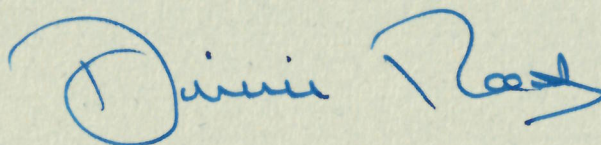
The combination of the Charity Commission's conclusions, an independent review carried out by Dr Suzanne Shale in 2018, the positive follow-up assessment by Dr Shale in late 2019 and DFID's own enhanced due diligence assessment provides assurance that Save the Children UK now clearly meet our enhanced safeguarding standards. We are confident they have an appropriate level of protection in place for people who receive aid and for staff. In addition, Save the Children UK have signed up to the new Inter-Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme championed by DFID, now FCDO.

My officials will also be in touch with Save the Children UK today, to inform them that their voluntary withdrawal can now come to an end and they are welcome to start bidding again for new HM Government funding opportunities as they arise. This means we would henceforth consider all Save the Children UK bids for funding in a fair and transparent manner, as we would for any other supply partner.

The UK is committed to driving up standards across the aid sector, including within the UK government, to ensure that we all take all reasonable steps to: prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment from occurring; listen to those who are affected; respond sensitively but robustly when harm or allegations of harm occur; and learn from every case. To this end, the government will publish a new UK government strategy on safeguarding in the aid sector which sets out the approach for tackling sexual abuse, exploitation and sexual harassment in three areas: all UK aid-spending departments; within UK aid-funded programmes delivered by external partners including the charity sector; and within the whole aid sector. I am attaching an embargoed copy.

I am proud the UK is a global leader in improving safeguarding standards across the aid sector. Our goal is to ensure that all those engaged in poverty reduction take all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, from occurring and respond appropriately when harm or allegations of harm occur. We will continue to support global efforts to improve safeguarding standards and ensure support is directed to help the most vulnerable across the globe.

Yes indeed,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dominic Raab', with a stylized flourish at the end.

THE RT HON DOMINIC RAAB MP