Dear Stephen,

Update reports on safeguarding against sexual misconduct in the aid sector

Given the IDC’s report last year and continued close interest in the issue of tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH) in the aid sector, I am writing with three reports which update on progress since the October 2018 Safeguarding Summit in London.

The first is from the Cross-Sector Safeguarding Steering Group which DFID has chaired quarterly since August 2018. The group brings together independent voices and representatives from each of the eight sectors who made commitments at the October 2018 London summit. The report gives a high-level summary of progress made by each of the eight groups against their commitments, along with challenges encountered and future plans.

The second report is from the group of 22 donors who signed the donor commitment document presented at the summit and who continue to meet quarterly in the safeguarding Technical Working Group chaired by DFID. The final report gives more detail about what DFID has done to meet the London donor commitments.

Given the public interest in this subject I am placing copies of all three reports in the Libraries of both Houses and publishing them on gov.uk.

My Department’s assessment is that the whole aid sector is now doing far more than was the case 12 months ago to prevent SEAH and respond better when cases occur. But we remain at an early stage of a long and challenging journey which requires changes to systems, behaviours and culture.

I would like to pay tribute to the role that you, Pauline Latham and the rest of your committee have played in stimulating action since early 2018 and continuing to keep minds focused on this crucial issue.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP
Secretary of State