

February 12, 2018

Christian Aid statement on sexual misconduct and safeguarding in the aid sector

Outlining its policy on dealing with claims of sexual harassment, Christian Aid said:

In the past 12 months, Christian Aid has investigated two incidences of sexual misconduct – both of which occurred overseas. One investigation led to the dismissal of a staff member, while the other case resulted in disciplinary action (not dismissal).

In both cases, no laws were broken, and neither involved incidents against minors. One of the cases was internal to Christian Aid, and the other case did not involve any individuals who were receiving support from Christian Aid.

However, the staff members involved did not live up to the standards and expectations outlined in our code of conduct. One of the instances was a case of failings in adequate safeguarding, which was reported to the Charity Commission. The Charity Commission indicated in its response to us that it was satisfied with the actions of Christian Aid and our Trustees, and that no further report on the safeguarding matter was required.

Christian Aid has no records of sexual misconduct related to our Haiti programme.

Christian Aid is a signatory to sector-wide codes of conduct. We also have a range of established policies and procedures aimed at preventing sexual harassment committed by any individual representing Christian Aid (including staff, volunteers and consultants) against other staff, beneficiaries or anyone else.

We continuously review and refresh our current policies and practices, to

and support our workforce, beneficiaries and stakeholders to report concerns and incidents without fear or favour, and to ensure protection and support for individuals who report or have experienced such incidents.

Across Christian Aid we continue to work with colleagues to ensure a better (and shared) understanding of what sexual harassment is, and the zero-tolerance culture we expect – including by training staff across the global organisation on the organisation's code of conduct.

We are engaging with The Churches Child Protection Advisory Service, who are reviewing our **safeguarding policies** and will be undertaking safeguarding training for managers.

Commenting on reports of misconduct by nine Oxfam staff in Haiti, in 2011, Christian Aid said:

We are saddened by the accounts of deplorable behaviour from a group of individuals who have abused their power, exploited their position, and sought to subvert systems designed to protect vulnerable people in Haiti. Through their unacceptable actions, they have undermined the vital, effective and life-changing work carried out by Oxfam, as well as by other aid and humanitarian organisations worldwide.

Christian Aid takes the issue very seriously. We are committed to ensuring that such behaviour is not tolerated either within our organisation or across the aid sector. We agree that further investigations are needed within the sector.

Many aid agencies have procedures covering safeguarding, whistleblowing and misconduct – collectively, we must work harder to ensure they are fit for purpose, to root out improper conduct. It is imperative that we are transparent and accountable, both to the communities where we work and to those who trust us to spend their money to alleviate suffering overseas.

Responding to reports that staff who left Oxfam in Haiti later joined other aid agencies, without their knowledge of the incidents, Christian Aid said:

Christian Aid always follows robust recruitment procedures, such as securing

Terrorism checks where required. If any issues arise during recruitment processes – through DBS, references, whistleblowing or even a verbal comment – we would always investigate and take appropriate action.

As part of our selection process, all employment contracts are subject to two satisfactory references, including one from a current employer. We request work email addresses and telephone numbers of each referee; we require them to submit reference forms attached to a covering letter on company-headed paper, sent from a work email address.

In cases where a referee has left the organisation, a HR name for that organisation will be required, so contact can be made to ensure the referee was employed by them and to ascertain suitability to provide the reference. Basic information would also be sought from the HR Department to confirm dates of employment and reason for leaving.

Like all employers, we are not legally permitted to force job applicants to reveal their spent convictions. And whilst we are not legally required to disclose information on why former Christian Aid employees have left the organisation, we always aim to provide factual information when asked. (At the same time, we have a duty to work within the legal framework of data protection, and we apply the British legal standard across our global organisation.)

We are committed to living out our values of respect and dignity for all, and we will investigate any claims about any individuals involved in the Haiti incident to ascertain the facts, should they relate to Christian Aid and should we receive further information.

Notes to Editors:

1. Christian Aid works in some of the world's poorest communities in around 40 countries at any one time. We act where there is great need, regardless of religion, helping people to live a full life, free from poverty. We provide urgent, practical and effective assistance in tackling the root causes of poverty as well as its effects.

2. Christian Aid's core belief is that the world can and must be changed so that poverty is ended: this is what we stand for. Everything we do is about ending poverty and injustice: swiftly, effectively, sustainably. Our strategy document **Partnership for Change**



3. Christian Aid is a member of **ACT Alliance**, a global coalition of more than 130 churches and church-related organisations that work together in humanitarian assistance, advocacy and development.

4. Follow Christian Aid's newswire on **Twitter**.

5. For more information about the work of Christian Aid, visit www.christianaid.org.uk

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About Christian Aid

We have more than 70 years' experience of working in partnership to support communities to thrive. We tackle the root causes of poverty so that women, men and children the world over are strengthened against future knocks. And if disasters happen, we get people the help they want straight away.

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