

2021 Annual Report on Protected Disclosures



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na hÉireann
Irish Prison Service

Introduction

Under Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 each public body is required to publish an annual report setting out the number of protected disclosures received in the preceding year and the action taken (if any). This report must not result in persons making disclosures being identifiable.

Irish Prison Service Protected Disclosures policy

The Irish Prison Service current Protected Disclosures Policy issued on 1st July 2018. The Policy is aimed at supporting the Irish Prison Service's values, ensuring employees can raise concerns about relevant wrongdoing which come to their attention in connection with their employment, without fear of penalisation and providing a transparent and confidential process for dealing with concerns.

The policy is being reviewed in line with the Directive (EU) 2019/1937 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2019 on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law. A revised policy is expected to issue in 2022.

Implementation of the Policy

To support the implementation of the policy the Irish Prison Service has committed to *the Integrity at Work Programme Membership* and the *Integrity at Work Pledge* with Transparency International Ireland ("TII"). Staff are made aware of *the Transparency International Ireland Speak Up Helpline 1800 844 866 for independent guidance* on reporting a concern or making a protected disclosure.

A dedicated **Protected Disclosure Manager** for the Irish Prison Service is in place with a confidential email address speakup@irishprisons.ie and Post Box Number to enable staff to raise their concerns through multiple channels.

Training and Communications

The Irish Prison Service continue to work with TII as part of the Integrity At Work ("IAW") programme. Information about IAW is included as part of staff induction.

A bespoke Protected Disclosures Portal features on the staff intranet which provides access to the Policy and support information including a comprehensive Frequently Asked Questions document. The Speak Up Safely Guide is also available for download on the staff intranet. Staff are made aware that free and confidential advice is available from TIIs Speak Up helpline and the Speak Up Safely Video is displayed.

Information notices regarding the Protected Disclosures Policy are displayed on electronic noticeboards which are available in staff areas in prisons. Posters with information highlighting the confidential phone line have been circulated to all prisons for display in staff areas.



In terms of external communications, unions, membership bodies and the Department of Justice have been informed about the Irish Prison Service participation in the IAW.

Training on the changes from Directive (EU) 2019/1937 which came into effect will occur throughout 2022.

Cooperation with the Department of Justice

The Irish Prison Service continues to work with the Department of Justice to ensure that the process for the submission of protected disclosures is clear and communicated carefully to all employees of the Irish Prison Service.

Protected Disclosures at end December 2021

During 2021, three allegations of wrongdoing were received for examination under the Irish Prison Service protected disclosures policy.

The three Disclosures received in 2021 were dealt with as follows:

2	Disclosures were assessed and put forward for investigation by external independent investigator.
1	Anonymous allegations sent to Head of Internal Audit who recommended that an investigation be undertaken by the IPS Management

Three investigations were concluded by the external investigator in 2021 for allegations received in 2019. The allegations in these investigations were not upheld. The results and recommendations of these finalised investigations were communicated to the relevant Director, the Director General and the Department of Justice for follow up action where appropriate.

