



**An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
agus Comhionannais**
Department of Justice
and Equality

**Report on Protected Disclosures received in the
Department of Justice and Equality (Vote 24)
2019**

Introduction

Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 requires public bodies to publish an, anonymised, annual report setting out the number of protected disclosures received in the preceding year and the action taken (if any).

The Department has a strong commitment to ensuring its culture and working environment encourages and facilitates anyone who might wish to ‘speak up’ on an issue that impinges on the department’s ability to carry out its responsibilities.

The Department continued to work with Transparency International Ireland during 2019 in relation to the revision of the Department’s Protected Disclosures Policy and staff training.

The Department is a member of Transparency International Ireland’s Integrity at work programme.

A dedicated confidential email address, speakup@justice.ie, was introduced in 2019 to encourage workers to report relevant wrongdoings.

External Assessments/Investigations

Since 2018 the Department has engaged the services of independent external assessors and investigators under the Office of Government Procurement Framework for Protected Disclosures.

The Protected Disclosures Policy allows, in certain cases, for the Department to assess/investigate disclosures through other processes where it deems them more appropriate.

Number of Protected Disclosures received in 2019

There were 15 potential protected disclosures received during 2019.

Summary of Protected Disclosures received in 2019

Correspondence received in 2019	Number
Total correspondence received for examination under the Protected Disclosures Policy:	15
Of the above, a number of disclosures did not relate to the Department or were not a worker (as defined by the Act):	7
Disclosures relating to the Department:	3
Disclosures relating to the Irish Prison Service (Vote 21) of which 1 was transferred to the Irish Prison Service for assessment/investigation*	5
Undergoing or awaiting assessment/investigation at 31/12/2019:	7

In addition to the seven protected disclosures undergoing or awaiting assessment/investigation at the end of 2019 there were a further twelve protected disclosure cases, relating to previous years, under investigation. A number of these are at an advanced stage of completion.

*The Irish Prison Service implemented a Protected Disclosure Policy in 2018. The policy provides for the investigation of disclosures relating to workers in the Irish Prison Service. Where the Department receives a disclosure concerning the Irish Prison Service directly from a Discloser, the Department will, in appropriate cases and with the agreement of the Discloser, forward such disclosures to the Irish Prison Service for examination.

Appendix 1 – Details of Offices/Agencies that have adopted the Department’s Protected Disclosures Policy

The Executive Offices or Agencies which come under the aegis of Vote 24 – Department of Justice and Equality who have adopted the Department’s policy are as follows:

Unit/Agency	Date Adopted
Criminal Assets Bureau	15/03/2017
Forensic Science Ireland	29/04/2015
Garda Inspectorate	13/06/2017
Insolvency Service of Ireland	23/04/2016
International Protection Appeals Tribunal	18/05/2015
International Protection Office	18/05/2015
Irish Film Classification Office	29/04/2015
National Property Services Regulatory Authority	08/05/2015
Office of the Data Protection Commissioner	23/04/2015
Office of the State Pathologist	05/05/2015
Private Security Authority	26/06/2015
Probation Service	29/04/2015
Reception and Integration Agency	20/05/2015

Note: The Irish Prison Service, Legal Aid Board, National Disability Authority, Courts Service, An Garda Síochána and the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission, have their own Protected Disclosures Policies in place and report separately on protected disclosures received.