

2024

Protected Disclosures Annual Report

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. The publication of the data in the report must be provided in a way that protects the identity of reporting persons.

By fostering and supporting a strong ethical culture, incorporating the principles of openness and transparency, the Legal Aid Board, (the Board) encourages workers to raise concerns regarding alleged wrongdoing in the workplace.

The Legal Aid Board has established internal reporting channels and procedures in accordance with the Act. Information, including how to make a report under the Board’s internal reporting channels and the Ministerial reporting channels, is provided on the Board’s website.

The Board is a member of the Integrity at Work Programme, a Transparency International Ireland initiative. As part of its commitment to protecting workers who raise concerns of wrongdoing, the Board has signed and complies with the Integrity at Work Pledge to ensure that workers reporting wrongdoing will not face penalisation and that action will be taken in response to the concerns raised.

[The Protected Disclosure reporting in the workplace Policy](https://www.legalaidboard.ie/en/policy-and-guidance/protected-disclosures/protected-disclosures-in-the-legal-aid-board-april-2024.pdfhttps%3A/www.legalaidboard.ie/en/policy-and-guidance/protected-disclosures/protected-disclosures-in-the-legal-aid-board-april-2024.pdf) has been drafted with reference to the Act and Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform Statutory Guidance (Protected Disclosures Act) for public bodies and prescribed persons, issued in November 2023.

A Protected Disclosures Designated Person is available to provide information to Workers. Where it is intended to communicate the concern directly to the designated person for protected disclosures, the report can be forwarded to a confidential email address at protecteddisclosure@legalaidboard.ie which enables workers to securely report concerns of wrongdoing.

The Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022 commenced operation on 1 January 2023. The new legislation established the Office of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner (OPDC).

This annual report reflects all reports of alleged wrongdoing received by the Legal Aid Board in 2024.

In 2024, 4 reports of alleged wrongdoing were received under the Board’s internal reporting channels for assessment in 2024. The OPDC referred 1 report of alleged wrongdoing to the Board for assessment in 2024.

In total, 5 reports of alleged wrongdoing were assessed by the Board in 2024. 1 of the 5 reports did not require investigation and 1 was undergoing assessment at the year-end.

No reports relating to a potential breach of EU law as set out in Directive 2019/1937 were assessed by the Board in 2024.

No anonymous reports were assessed by the Board in 2024.

The table below provides details of the reports assessed by the Board in 2024.

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| --- | --- |
| Reports requiring assessment by the Board in 2024  | No.  |
| Correspondence transmitted from the Office of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner to the Board for assessment | 1 |
| Correspondence addressed to the Board’s internal reporting channel for assessment  | 4 |
| Total correspondence for assessment in 2024  | 5 |
| Outcome of 5 assessments conducted by the Board in 2024 |
| * Awaiting completion at year end
 | 1 |
| * Closed with no further action taken
 | 2 |