



Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil  
Environment, Community and Local Government



## **Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government**

### **Report under Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 for the period 15 July 2014 to 31 December 2014**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Protected Disclosures Act 2014 became operational on 15th July 2014. The legislation is intended to provide a robust statutory framework to protect workers who raise concerns regarding potential wrongdoing (whistleblowers) that has come to their attention in the workplace. The Act requires every public body to establish and maintain procedures for dealing with protected disclosures and to provide written information relating to these procedures to workers.

The legislation provides a comprehensive suite of employment and other protections to whistleblowers that are penalised by their employer or suffer a detriment from a third party on account of raising concerns regarding possible wrongdoing in their workplace. They will benefit from civil immunity from actions for damages and a qualified privilege under defamation law. Making a protected disclosure or reasonably believing a disclosure is protected is a defence to any offence prohibiting or restricting the disclosure of information.

The Act sets out a number of ways in which disclosures can be made – for example, to a person's employer and, in some circumstances, to an external 'prescribed' person.

#### **Annual Report**

Each public body is required (under Section 22 of the Act) 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.

This is the first annual report of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government under Section 22 of the Act. It covers the period 15 July 2014 to 31 December 2014.

The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. We aim to foster a working environment within which employees feel able to raise concerns relating to potential wrongdoing in the workplace and to provide the necessary support procedures for those that raise genuine concerns. The Department issued written procedures to workers to advise them of the approach to take when seeking to make a protected disclosure; this document, entitled Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government – Protected Disclosure Policy, is available [here](#).

No protected disclosures were received in the Department between 15 July and the 31 December 2014.