



Údarás Sábháilteachta Bia na hÉireann
Food Safety Authority of Ireland

2025

External Protected Disclosure Policy and Procedure

Guide for workers reporting information to the FSAI
under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014



External Protected Disclosure Policy and Procedure

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Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
GLOSSARY.....	3
PROTECTED DISCLOSURES ACT	4
EXTERNAL REPORTING CHANNEL.....	4
1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH A REPORT TO THE FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY OF IRELAND QUALIFIES AS A PROTECTED DISCLOSURE.....	6
2.1 WHAT IS A PROTECTED DISCLOSURE?.....	6
2.2 WHO CAN MAKE A PROTECTED DISCLOSURE?.....	6
2.3 WHAT IS RELEVANT INFORMATION?	7
2.4 WHAT IS REASONABLE BELIEF?	8
2.5 WHAT IS A RELEVANT WRONGDOING?	8
2.6 MATTERS THAT ARE NOT RELEVANT WRONGDOINGS	9
2.7 WHAT IS A WORK-RELATED CONTEXT?.....	9
2.8 WHO CAN A PROTECTED DISCLOSURE BE MADE TO?.....	9
3. HOW TO MAKE A REPORT	11
4. ANONYMOUS REPORTS.....	12
5. PROCESS FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF A REPORT.....	12
5.1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	12
5.2 ASSESSMENT	13
5.3 FOLLOW-UP	14
5.4 FEEDBACK.....	14
6. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROTECTION OF IDENTITY	15
7. PROTECTION FROM PENALISATION	16
8. PROTECTION FROM LEGAL LIABILITY.....	18

9. PROTECTION OF PERSONS CONCERNED	19
10. SUPPORTS AND INFORMATION	20
REVIEW.....	20
DISCLAIMER	21
APPENDIX A - WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A DISCLOSURE.....	22
APPENDIX B - RECORD KEEPING, DATA PROTECTION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION	23
B.1 RECORD KEEPING	23
B.2 DATA PROTECTION.....	23
B.3 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION.....	24

Glossary

Designated Person	A person within an organisation authorised to receive, handle, and follow up on protected disclosures.
External Reporting	The making of a protected disclosure to a designated prescribed person rather than to an employer
Internal Reporting	Making a disclosure within an organisation, typically to a manager or to human resources
Penalisation	Any direct or indirect act or omission that occurs in a work-related context, which is prompted by the making of a protected disclosure and causes or may cause unjustified detriment to a worker.
Prescribed Person	An individual designated by the Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform to receive protected disclosures in specific areas. The Chief Executive of the FSAI is a prescribed person for food safety matters.
Protected Disclosure	A report made by a worker about a relevant wrongdoing in a work-related context, protected under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014.
Relevant Information	Information that, in the reasonable belief of the worker, shows one or more relevant wrongdoings and was obtained in a work-related context.
Relevant Wrongdoing	Wrongful acts covered under the Protected Disclosures Act, including breaches of legal obligations, environmental damage, and endangerment of health or safety.
Reporting Person	A worker who makes a protected disclosure under the Act.
Work Related Context	Current or past work activities through which, irrespective of the nature of those activities, information is acquired by a worker concerning a relevant wrongdoing and within which the discloser could suffer penalisation if such information was reported.

Protected Disclosures Act

The Protected Disclosures Act 2014 protects workers from retaliation if they speak up about wrongdoing in the workplace. Persons who make protected disclosures (sometimes referred to as “whistleblowers”) are protected by this legislation.

Making a “protected disclosure” refers to a situation where a person who is or was in a work-based relationship with an organisation discloses information in relation to wrongdoing that the person has acquired in the context of current or past work-related activity.

The Act provides that a reporting person may make a disclosure to their employer. This is referred to as “internal reporting”. The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) has put in place a formal channel and related procedures for their employees to make disclosures, this is referred to as an “internal reporting channel”.

The Act also provides that a reporting person may make a disclosure to a person designated by the Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform. Such persons are referred to as “prescribed persons”. Where a reporting person makes a disclosure to a prescribed person, this is referred to as “external reporting”. The Chief Executive of the FSAI is a prescribed person and information on how the FSAI facilitate external parties in making a disclosure is set out in this document.

EXTERNAL REPORTING CHANNEL

1. Introduction

The Chief Executive of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) has been prescribed under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 to receive protected disclosures in respect of all matters relating to the regulation, enforcement, and monitoring of food safety in the State.

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act 1998 (No. 29 of 1998), Section 11 states the principal function of the Authority shall be to take all reasonable steps to ensure that—

(a) food produced in the State (whether or not distributed or marketed in the State), and

(b) food distributed or marketed in the State,

meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene reasonably attainable and it shall, in particular, take all reasonable steps to ensure that such food complies—

(a) with any relevant food legislation in respect of food safety and hygiene standards,

or

(b) in the absence of any such legislation, with the provisions of generally recognised standards or codes of good practice aimed at ensuring the achievement of high standards of food hygiene and food safety.

The Protected Disclosures Act (“the Act”) protects workers from retaliation if they speak up about certain wrongdoings in the workplace. Persons who make protected disclosures (sometimes referred to as “whistleblowers”) are protected by the Act. They should not be treated unfairly or lose their job because they have made a protected disclosure.

A worker may choose to report internally to their employer or, if certain conditions are satisfied, a worker can choose to report externally to a prescribed person.

In accordance with the Act, the FSAI has established a formal channel for workers who wish to make an external report to them in relation to the matters set out above.

The FSAI will:

- Keep the identity of the reporting person and any person named in a report confidential;
- Acknowledge all reports within seven days unless the reporting person requests otherwise;
- Assess and, where appropriate, follow-up on the information contained in the report;
- Provide feedback to the reporting person; and
- Provide information to the reporting person on the final outcome of their report.

This policy also applies to any reports transmitted to the FSAI by another prescribed person or the Protected Disclosures Commissioner in accordance with the Act.

Please read this document carefully before making a report. It is solely your responsibility to ensure you meet the criteria for protection under the Act. If you have any queries about this policy, please contact: protecteddisclosure@fsai.ie

If you require confidential, independent advice (including legal advice) on the making of a protected disclosure, please refer to section 10 of this document.

2. CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH A REPORT TO THE FSAI QUALIFIES AS A PROTECTED DISCLOSURE

2.1 WHAT IS A PROTECTED DISCLOSURE?

A “protected disclosure” is a disclosure of “relevant information” made by a “worker” in the manner specified in the Act. The relevant information must, in the reasonable belief of the worker, tend to show one or more “relevant wrongdoings” and have come to the attention of the worker in a “work-related context”.

To report to the FSAI or any other prescribed person a worker must also reasonably believe:

(a) that the relevant wrongdoing falls within the description of matters in respect of which the person is prescribed to receive disclosures;

and

(b) that the information disclosed, and any allegation contained in it, are substantially true.

You must fulfil all of the requirements set out in the Act in order for your report to qualify as a protected disclosure. These requirements are explained in more detail below.

If you are uncertain as to whether your report qualifies as a protected disclosure, you should seek professional advice. Please refer to Section 10 of this document for further information.

2.2 WHO CAN MAKE A PROTECTED DISCLOSURE?

You can make a protected disclosure if you are a “worker”. A “worker” is an individual who acquires information on relevant wrongdoings in a work-related context and who is or was:

(a) an employee;

- (b) an independent contractor;
- (c) an agency worker;
- (d) a trainee;
- (e) a shareholder of an undertaking;
- (f) a member of the administrative, management or supervisory body of an undertaking including non-executive members;
- (g) a volunteer;
- (h) an individual who acquired information on a relevant wrongdoing during a recruitment process;
- (i) an individual who acquired information on a relevant wrongdoing during pre-contractual negotiations (other than a recruitment process).

If you are **not** a worker as defined under the Act, you cannot make a protected disclosure and you are **not** protected by the Act.

If you are a consumer and have experienced unfit food, poor hygiene standards, misleading food labelling or any act that is in breach of food law when buying food or eating out, you can make a complaint to us by:

- Filling in the online complaint form available on the FSAI website at <https://www.fsai.ie/contact/make-a-complaint> and we will refer it for follow-up.
- Or emailing our Advice Line at info@fsai.ie
- Or calling our Advice Line on **0818 33 66 77**.

2.3 WHAT IS RELEVANT INFORMATION?

Relevant information is information which in the reasonable belief of the worker tends to show one or more relevant wrongdoings and it came to the attention of the worker in a work-related context.

The information you report should disclose facts about someone or something, rather than a general allegation that is not founded on any facts.

You should not investigate allegations of wrongdoing or gather additional evidence or information – just tell us the facts that you know.

2.4 WHAT IS REASONABLE BELIEF?

Your belief must be based on reasonable grounds but it is not a requirement that you are ultimately correct. You are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation. Once the requirements of the Act have been satisfied, you remain entitled to the protections of the Act even if the information you have reported turns out to be unfounded.

Your motivation for making a report is irrelevant as to whether or not it is a protected disclosure.

A report made in the absence of reasonable belief is not a protected disclosure and could lead to your employer taking disciplinary action against you. It is a criminal offence to make a report that contains any information that you know to be false. You could also face legal action from any person who suffers damage resulting from a report you have made that you know to be false.

2.5 WHAT IS A RELEVANT WRONGDOING?

To qualify as a protected disclosure, the information you report must concern a “relevant wrongdoing”. The following are relevant wrongdoings under the Protected Disclosure Act:

- (a) that an offence has been, is being or is likely to be committed;
- (b) that a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation, other than one arising under the worker’s contract of employment or other contract whereby the worker undertakes to do or perform personally any work or services;
- (c) that a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
- (d) that the health or safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered;
- (e) that the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged;
- (f) that an unlawful or otherwise improper use of funds or resources of a public body, or of other public money, has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
- (g) that an act or omission by or on behalf of a public body is oppressive, discriminatory or grossly negligent or constitutes gross mismanagement;
- (h) that a breach of EU law as set out in the Act, has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur; or

- (i) that information tending to show any matter falling within any of the preceding paragraphs has been, is being or is likely to be concealed or destroyed or an attempt has been, is being or is likely to be made to conceal or destroy such information.

In order to report to the FSAI, the information you wish to report must concern a relevant wrongdoing **and** fall within the scope of the matters for which the FSAI has been prescribed under the Act. See section 2.8, below, for further information on what can be reported to us.

2.6 MATTERS THAT ARE NOT RELEVANT WRONGDOINGS

A matter is not a relevant wrongdoing which it is the function of the worker or the worker's employer to detect, investigate or prosecute and does not consist of or involve an act or omission on the part of the employer.

A matter concerning interpersonal grievances exclusively affecting a worker is not a relevant wrongdoing and will not be dealt with under this procedure. Such grievances should be raised with your employer in accordance with their policy on such matters.

Failure to comply with a legal obligation that arises solely under your contract of employment or any other contract where you undertake to do or perform personally any work or services is not a relevant wrongdoing. Such matters should be raised with your employer in accordance with their policy in this area.

Protected disclosures can only be made by workers and must meet the requirements of the Act (see next section).

2.7 WHAT IS A WORK-RELATED CONTEXT?

"Work-related context" means current or past work activities in the public or private sector through which, irrespective of the nature of those activities, you acquire information concerning a relevant wrongdoing and within which you could suffer penalisation if you reported such information.

2.8 WHO CAN A PROTECTED DISCLOSURE BE MADE TO?

You can report internally to your employer and, if you are comfortable with this, you are encouraged to do so. Most protected disclosures are made internally in the first instance.

You do **not** have to report to your employer before you can report to a prescribed person.

Your employer may have a protected disclosures or whistleblowing policy. All public sector bodies, regardless of size, and all employers with 50 or more employees are required, under the Act, to have formal channels and procedures for their workers to report relevant wrongdoing.

If you don't want to report to your employer or reporting to your employer hasn't worked, you may have the option of reporting to a prescribed person.

The Chief Executive of the FSAI is a prescribed person.

In order to report to the FSAI the information you wish to report must have come to your attention in a work-related context and you must reasonably believe:

(a) That the information tends to show one or more relevant wrongdoings;

(b) That the information, and any allegation contained in it, is substantially true;

and

(c) That the information falls within the description of matters for which the FSAI has been prescribed.

The Chief Executive of the FSAI has been prescribed under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 to receive protected disclosures in respect of all matters relating to the regulation, enforcement, and monitoring of food safety in the State.

If the matter you wish to report is a relevant wrongdoing but does not fall under the description of matters set out above, it may be possible that another prescribed person can deal with your report. A full list of all of the prescribed persons and the matters that can be reported to them can be found at: www.gov.ie/prescribed-persons/.

If you are uncertain as to who the correct prescribed person to report to is or there does not appear to be a prescribed person for the matter you wish to report, you can make a report to the Protected Disclosures Commissioner. Details of how to report to the Commissioner can be found at: <https://www.opdc.ie/>.

If the relevant wrongdoing you wish to report concerns a breach of European Union (EU) law, as set out in [EU Directive 2019/1937](#) on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law, you can report to a relevant institution, body, office or agency of the EU, provided:

- You believe the information you wish to report is true at the time of reporting; and

- The information falls with the scope of [EU Directive 2019/1937](#).

If reporting to your employer and/or reporting to a prescribed person does not work or there are justifiable grounds for not reporting to either your employer or a prescribed person, the Act provides that you can report to:

- A relevant Minister of the Government if you are employed by a public body; or
- Any other third party.

The conditions for reporting via these channels are more onerous than those that apply to reporting to your employer or a prescribed person or the Protected Disclosures Commissioner. You may wish to seek professional advice before using these channels.

Please refer to section 10 of this document for information as to where to seek further advice in this regard.

3. HOW TO MAKE A REPORT

A Protected Disclosure may be submitted to the FSAI in writing or orally. Reports can be submitted as follows:

By email to: Protecteddisclosure@fsai.ie

or,

By post to:

Protected Disclosures,

Food Safety Authority of Ireland

The Exchange

Georges Dock, IFSC

Dublin 1 D01 P2V6

or, by leaving a voicemail on our dedicated protected disclosure phonenumber:

01 858 5525 (access to this voicemail system is restricted solely to persons designated to receive and handle reports).

A report can be made by way of a physical meeting upon request. Email protecteddisclosure@fsai.ie or phone the dedicated protected disclosure phonenumber (**01 858 5525**) stating that you wish to make a report in person and provide contact details so that we can contact you to agree a date and time for that meeting.

It is recommended that reports contain at least the information set out in Appendix A.

This policy and procedure also apply to reports we receive under the Act from other prescribed persons or the Protected Disclosures Commissioner.

Any reports made to us via channels other than that set out in this section that, in our opinion, may qualify as a protected disclosure will be transmitted promptly and without modification to the Designated Person and this policy will apply to those reports.

4. ANONYMOUS REPORTS

Reports can be made anonymously. If you choose to report anonymously and your report meets the requirements of the Act, you remain entitled to the protections of the Act if you are subsequently identified and penalised for making your report.

Anonymous reports will be followed up to the greatest extent possible. However, it may not be possible to fully assess and follow-up on an anonymous report.

In addition, implementing certain elements of this policy – such as seeking further information from you, maintaining communication with you, and protecting your identity – may not be possible.

5. PROCESS FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF A REPORT

5.1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We will acknowledge all reports in writing within 7 days of receipt unless:

(a) You request that no acknowledgement is made;

or

(b) We reasonably believe that to issue an acknowledgement would jeopardise the protection of your identity.

A copy of this policy and procedure will be included with the written acknowledgement.

5.2 ASSESSMENT

We shall assess:

(a) If we consider there is *prima facie* evidence that a relevant wrongdoing might have occurred;

and

(b) Whether the report concerns matters that fall within the scope of the matters for which we have been prescribed under the Act, as set out in section 1 of this policy.

We may, if required, make contact with you, in confidence, in order to seek further information or clarification regarding the matter(s) you have reported.

The Act requires that you shall cooperate with us in relation to the performance of our functions under the Act. This includes any functions we carry out as part of the assessment process.

We may find it necessary to differentiate the information contained in a report. It may be the case that our assessment finds that not all of the matters reported qualify as relevant wrongdoings under the Act or fall within the matters for which we have been prescribed under the Act. We may deal with different parts of a report differently according to what, in our opinion, is the most appropriate thing to do in each case.

We may decide that there is no *prima facie* evidence that a relevant wrongdoing may have occurred. If this decision is made, we will close the procedure and notify you in writing of this decision as soon as practicable and the reasons for it.

We may decide that there is *prima facie* evidence that a relevant wrongdoing may have occurred but that the relevant wrongdoing is clearly minor and does not require follow up. If this decision is made the procedure will be closed and you will be notified in writing as soon as practicable of the decision and the reasons for it.

We may decide that all or part of a report is a repetitive report that does not contain any meaningful new information compared to a previous report. If this decision is made, the procedure will be closed and you will be notified in writing as soon as practicable of the decision and the reasons for it.

We may decide that all or part of a report concerns matters which are not within the scope of matters for which we have been prescribed under the Act. If this decision is made, we will transmit your report – in whole or in part, as appropriate – to such other prescribed person or persons as we consider appropriate or, where, in our opinion, there is no such other prescribed person, to the Protected Disclosures Commissioner. You will be notified in writing as soon as practicable of the decision and the reasons for it.

5.3 FOLLOW-UP

Where, in our opinion, there is *prima facie* evidence that a relevant wrongdoing may have occurred, we shall decide on what further follow-up action is required, having regard to our statutory powers and functions, and having regard to the nature and seriousness of the matter.

The Act requires that you must cooperate with us in relation to the performance of our functions under the Act. This includes any functions we carry out as part of the follow-up process.

5.4 FEEDBACK

Feedback will be provided to you within a reasonable time period and no later than 3 months after the initial acknowledgement of your report or, if no acknowledgement was sent, no later than 3 months after your report was received. This time period applies whether your report was initially made directly to us or initially made to another prescribed person or the Protected Disclosures Commissioner and then transmitted to us.

In duly justified circumstances, the time period for the provision of feedback may be extended to 6 months, having regard to the nature and complexity of the report. We will inform you, in writing, of any decision to extend the feedback period as soon as practicable after the decision is made.

Notwithstanding your right to request further feedback, we will endeavour to provide further feedback to you at 3-month intervals until the process of follow-up is completed.

Any feedback we give is provided in confidence and should not be disclosed to anyone else other than:

- (a) as part of the process of seeking legal advice in relation to your report from a solicitor or a barrister or a trade union official; or
- (b) if required in order to make a further report through this or another reporting channel provided for under the Act.

The FSAI is bound by statutory obligations that limit the extent of feedback it can provide to the reporting person. Where possible, feedback will include information on actions taken or planned in response to the report, along with the reasons for those actions. However, no information will be disclosed if it could prejudice the outcome of an investigation or any subsequent actions, including legal proceedings.

Feedback will not include any information relating to an identified or identifiable third party.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROTECTION OF IDENTITY

The FSAI has a legal obligation to protect the identity of all workers who raise a concern under these procedures and to protect the confidentiality of any information disclosed.

Subject to the exceptions below, the identity of the reporting person or any information from which their identity may be directly or indirectly deduced will not be shared with anyone other than persons authorised to receive, handle or follow-up on reports under this policy without the reporting person's explicit consent.

The Protected Disclosures Act provides for certain exceptions where a reporting person's identity or information that could identify the reporting person can be disclosed with or without the reporting person's consent. There are:

- (a) Where the disclosure is a necessary and proportionate obligation imposed by EU or national law in the context of investigations or judicial proceedings, including safeguarding the rights of defence of persons connected with the alleged wrongdoing;
- (b) Where the person to whom the report was made or transmitted shows they took all reasonable steps to avoid disclosing the identity of the reporting person or any information that could identify the reporting person;
- (c) Where the person to whom the report was made or transmitted reasonably believes disclosing the identity of the reporting person or information that could identify the reporting

person is necessary for the prevention of serious risk to the security of the State, public health, public safety, or the environment; and

(d) Where the disclosure is otherwise required by law.

Where disclosure of your identity or information that could identify you is to be disclosed under one or more of these exceptions, you will be notified in writing in advance with reasons for the disclosure, unless such notification would jeopardise:

- The effective investigation of the relevant wrongdoing reported;
- The prevention of serious risk to the security of the State, public health, public safety, or the environment; or
- The prevention of crime or the prosecution of a criminal offence.

Circumstances may arise where protection of identity is difficult or impossible – e.g. if the nature of the information you have disclosed means that you are easily identifiable. If this occurs, the risks and potential actions that could be taken to mitigate them will be outlined and discussed with you.

If you believe your identity has been unlawfully disclosed by the FSAI, you may contact the organisation's Data Protection Officer at DPO@fsai.ie to obtain further information

Records will be kept of all reports, including anonymous reports, in accordance with applicable FSAI policies concerning record keeping, data retention and data protection legislation. Please refer to Appendix B for further information.

7. PROTECTION FROM PENALISATION

The Act provides a range of statutory protections for workers who are penalised for making a protected disclosure.

Penalisation is any direct or indirect act or omission that occurs in a work-related context, which is prompted by the making of a protected disclosure and causes or may cause unjustified detriment to a worker.

Penalisation includes, but is not limited to:

(a) Suspension, layoff, or dismissal;

- (b)** Demotion, loss of opportunity for promotion or withholding promotion;
- (c)** Transfer of duties, change of location of place of work, reduction in wages or change in working hours;
- (d)** The imposition or administering of any discipline, reprimand, or other penalty (including a financial penalty);
- (e)** Coercion, intimidation, harassment, or ostracism;
- (f)** Discrimination, disadvantage, or unfair treatment;
- (g)** Injury, damage, or loss;
- (h)** Threat of reprisal;
- (i)** Withholding of training;
- (j)** A negative performance assessment or employment reference;
- (k)** Failure to convert a temporary employment contract into a permanent one, where the worker had a legitimate expectation that he or she would be offered permanent employment;
- (l)** Failure to renew or early termination of a temporary employment contract;
- (m)** Harm, including to the worker's reputation, particularly in social media, or financial loss, including loss of business and loss of income;
- (n)** Blacklisting on the basis of a sector or industry-wide informal or formal agreement, which may entail that the person will not, in the future, find employment in the sector or industry;
- (o)** Early termination or cancellation of a contract for goods or services;
- (p)** Cancellation of a licence or permit; and
- (q)** Psychiatric or medical referrals.

The Act provides that a worker who suffers penalisation as a result of making a protected disclosure can make a claim for redress at either the Workplace Relations Commission or the courts, as appropriate.

A claim concerning penalisation or dismissal must be brought to the Workplace Relations Commission within 6 months of the date of the instance of penalisation or the date of dismissal to which the claim relates.

A claim for interim relief pending proceedings at the Workplace Relations Commission or the courts must be made to the Circuit Court within 21 days of the last date of penalisation or date of dismissal.

It is a criminal offence to penalise or threaten penalisation or to cause or permit any other person to penalise or threaten penalisation against any of the following:

- The reporting person;
- A facilitator (a person who assists the reporting person in the reporting process);
- A person connected to the reporting person, who could suffer retaliation in a work-related context, such as a colleague or a relative; or
- An entity the reporting person owns, works for, or is otherwise connected with in a work-related context.

The FSAI cannot determine if a report qualifies for protection under the Act nor can it intervene or offer legal advice in any employment dispute or any other dispute concerning allegations of penalisation under the Act. Please refer to section 10 of this document on how to obtain further information and independent, confidential, advice in relation to these statutory rights.

8. PROTECTION FROM LEGAL LIABILITY

In general, the Act provides that no civil legal action can succeed against you for making a protected disclosure. The one exception to this is in relation to defamation.

You can be sued for defamation but you are entitled to a defence of “qualified privilege”. This means that it should be very difficult for a person to win a case against you if you can show you made a protected disclosure in accordance with the Act and did not act maliciously.

There is no other basis under which you can be sued if you have made a protected disclosure in accordance with the Act – e.g. for breach of confidentiality.

If you are prosecuted for disclosing information that is prohibited or restricted, it is a defence to show that, at the time of the alleged offence, you reasonably believed you were making a protected disclosure.

The Act also provides that any provision in any agreement is void insofar as it would:

- Prohibit or restrict the making of a protected disclosure;
- Exclude or limit any provision of the Act;
- Preclude a person from taking any proceedings under or by virtue of the Act; or
- Preclude a person from bringing proceedings for breach of contract in respect of anything done in consequence of the making of a protected disclosure.

Bear in mind that, if you make a report that you know is false, it is **not** a protected disclosure. You could be exposed to legal risks, such as being sued for defamation or breach of confidentiality. You could also face criminal prosecution.

If you are in any doubt as to whether these protections apply to you, you should seek professional advice. Please refer to section 10 of this document on how to obtain further information and independent, confidential advice in this regard.

9. PROTECTION OF PERSONS CONCERNED

A “person concerned” is a person who is referred to in a report made under the Act as a person to whom the relevant wrongdoing is attributed or with whom that person is associated.

Persons concerned are entitled to protection of their identity for as long as any investigation triggered by the making of a report under this Policy is ongoing.

This protection of identity does not preclude the disclosure of said identity where the FSAI reasonably considers such disclosure is necessary for the purposes of the Act or where such disclosure is otherwise authorised or required by law.

Persons concerned have the right to take legal action against a person who knowingly makes a false report against them, if they suffer damage as a result of the false report.

10. SUPPORTS AND INFORMATION

Transparency International Ireland operates a free Speak-Up Helpline that offers support and referral advice (which may include referral to legal advice) for workers who have reported or plan to report wrongdoing. The helpline can be contacted by any of the following methods:

- Phoning **1800 844 866 (+353 1 554 3965)** from outside of Ireland), or
- Through using the encrypted messaging app 'Signal': Speak Up Helpline **087 385 9996**. Please note that only Signal-encrypted messages will be responded to.
- By completing the secure online report form available at: <https://helpline.speakup.ie/#/>
- By emailing helpline@transparency.ie , or via encrypted email to trachelpdesk@hushmail.com
- By writing to Transparency International Ireland, Floor 3, 69 Middle Abbey, Dublin 1, D01 P5Y4.

For workers who are members of a trade union, many unions offer free legal advice services on employment-related matters, including protected disclosures.

Further information regarding the Act is available from Citizens Information at:

<https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/enforcement-and-redress/protection-for-whistleblowers/>

Information in relation to making a complaint of penalisation to the Workplace Relations Commission can be found at: <https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/>

Review

The FSAI will monitor the operation of its policies and procedures in respect of external disclosures. This policy will be reviewed as and when required and at least once within 3 years.

Disclaimer

This document is for information purposes only, it is not a complete or authoritative statement of the law or a legal interpretation of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 and does not constitute legal advice and should not be relied on as such. It is intended as a general information note on the making of a protected disclosure to the FSAI and is not a substitute for professional legal advice. This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Protected Disclosures Act 2014¹ to which it relates.

This document is informed by Department of Public Expenditure and Reform guidance titled *Protected Disclosures Act Statutory guidance for public bodies and prescribed persons November 2023*.

¹ Link to Law Reform Commission consolidated version of [Protected Disclosures Act 2014](#)

Appendix A - What to include in a disclosure

When making a disclosure, provide as much information possible, including:

- a. That the report is a protected disclosure and is being made under the procedures set out in this policy;
- b. The reporting person's name, position in the organisation, place of work and confidential contact details;
- c. The date of the alleged wrongdoing (if known) or the date the alleged wrongdoing commenced or was identified;
- d. Whether or not the alleged wrongdoing is still ongoing;
- e. Whether the alleged wrongdoing has already been disclosed and if so, to whom, when, and what action was taken;
- f. Information in respect of the alleged wrongdoing (what is occurring/has occurred and how) and any supporting information;
- g. The name of any person(s) allegedly involved in the alleged wrongdoing (if any name is known and the worker considers that naming an individual is necessary to report the wrongdoing disclosed); and
- h. Any other relevant information.

Appendix B - Record keeping, data protection and freedom of information

B.1 Record keeping

A record of all reports – including all anonymous reports – will be kept securely with appropriate safeguards in place. Access to the information is restricted to authorised personnel only. The information will be retained for a period in keeping with the appropriate legislation and the FSAI's Data Retention Policy.

Where a report is made via our dedicated protected disclosure phonenumber (01 858 5525), a recording will be kept in a secure restricted access electronic file. A transcript of the message will be made. The reporting person shall be afforded the opportunity to check, rectify and agree this transcript.

Where a report is made via a physical meeting with an authorised member of staff, the report shall be documented by way of accurate minutes of the conversation taken by an authorised member of staff. The reporting person shall be afforded the opportunity to check, rectify and agree these minutes.

Any subsequent follow-up meetings that take place will be logged and documented by way of accurate minutes of the conversation taken by an authorised member of staff.

B.2 Data protection

As far as is possible, personal data will be processed in accordance with applicable data protection law. This includes, but is not limited to, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018.

When making a protected disclosure, it is important to note that certain restrictions may be placed on the rights of data subjects. More specifically, Section 18 of the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022 addresses data protection in the context of protected disclosures. It outlines the restrictions on the rights and obligations allowed under Article 23 of the GDPR and,

where relevant, under the Law Enforcement Directive (LED).^{2 3} These restrictions may be necessary in order to safeguard important public interests and to protect the identity of reporting persons.

If you believe a right has been restricted, you may contact the Data Protection Officer at the FSAI for an explanation (DPO@fsai.ie). Being provided with further information, however, may not always be possible. This can happen, for example, where providing such information (i) could identify the reporting person or persons concerned; (ii) could prejudice the effective follow-up of a report; and/or (iii) could prejudice the achievement of any important objective of general public interest as set out in protected disclosures legislation. If you are not satisfied with the Data Protection Officer's response, you may make a complaint to the Data Protection Commission (DPC) or seek a judicial remedy in respect of the restriction.

If you would like further information about the FSAI and data protection, you may look at its [Data Protection Statement](#) which appears on the website www.fsai.ie. This Statement is reviewed and updated at regular intervals. If you require further information and/or clarification, the Data Protection Officer may be contacted by emailing DPO@fsai.ie.

B.3 Freedom of information

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 does not apply to any records which relate to disclosures made under protected disclosure legislation. This restriction applies irrespective of when these records were created.

² Directive (EU) 2016/680 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, and on the free movement of such data.

³ The FSAI is a 'competent authority' under this legislation.



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