

Report on Protected Disclosures received by the Data Protection Commission in 2021

The policy operated by the Data Protection Commission (DPC) under the terms of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 is designed to facilitate and encourage all workers to raise internally genuine concerns about possible wrongdoing in the workplace so that these concerns can be investigated following the principles of natural justice and addressed in a manner appropriate to the circumstances of the case.

Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 requires public bodies to prepare and publish, by 30 June in each year, a report in relation to the previous year in an anonymised form.

Pursuant to this requirement, the DPC confirms that in 2021:

- No internal protected disclosures (from staff of the DPC) were received.
- 16 potential protected disclosures (set out in the table below) were received from individuals external to the DPC in relation to issues pertaining to data protection within other entities. These issues were raised with the DPC in its role as a 'prescribed person' as provided for under Section 7 of the Protected Disclosures Act (listed in SI 364/2020). Four of the disclosures were accepted as valid protected disclosures.

Reference Number	Type	Date Received	Status	Outcome
01/2021	Section 7 (external, to 'prescribed person')	01 Feb 2021	Open	Accepted and referred for potential investigation. Ongoing at year-end.

02/2021	Section 7 (external, to 'prescribed person')	05 Feb 2021	Closed	Accepted. The DPC engaged with the Data Controller on the issues raised.
03/2021	Section 7 (external, to 'prescribed person')	10 Feb 2021	Closed	Insufficient detail provided; complaint did not follow up when requested.
04/2021	Section 7 (external, to 'prescribed person')	30 Mar 2021	Closed	Not accepted as a valid protected disclosure.
05/2021	Section 7 (external, to 'prescribed person')	01 Jun 2021	Closed	Not accepted as a valid protected disclosure, referred as a potential complaint.
06/2021	Section 7 (external, to 'prescribed person')	12 Jun 2021	Closed	Insufficient detail and made anonymously.
07/2021	Section 7 (external, to 'prescribed person')	24 Jun 2021	Closed	Not a protected disclosure on follow-up. Standard complaint made.
08/2021	Section 7 (external, to 'prescribed person')	14 Jul 2021	Closed	No information provided. Complaint did not follow up when requested.
09/2021	Section 7 (external, to 'prescribed person')	31 Aug 2021	Closed	No allegations made. Complainant did not follow up when requested.
10/2021	Section 7 (external, to 'prescribed person')	07 Sep 2021	Closed	Insufficient detail. Complainant did not provide information when requested.
11/2021	Section 7 (external, to 'prescribed person')	09 Sep 2021	Closed	No allegations made. Complainant did not follow up when requested.

12/2021	Section 7 (external, to 'prescribed person')	08 Oct 2021	Closed	Not a data protection matter, withdrawn by complainant.
13/2021	Section 7 (external, to 'prescribed person')	22 Oct 2021	Closed	No allegations made. Complainant did not make a disclosure when contacted.
14/2021	Section 7 (external, to 'prescribed person')	15 Nov 2021	Open	Accepted and referred for potential investigation. Ongoing at year-end.
15/2021	Section 7 (external, to 'prescribed person')	15 Dec 2021	Closed	Not accepted as a valid protected disclosure, referred as a potential complaint.
16/2021	Section 7 (external, to 'prescribed person')	17 Dec 2021	Open	Accepted and referred for potential investigation. Ongoing at year-end.