



Éilis Fallon
Committee Secretariat
Committee of Public Accounts
By eMail to PAC@oireachtas.ie

1 July 2021

Your Ref: S0309 PAC33

Dear Éilis

I refer to Secretary General Gleeson's letter dated 4 May 2021 in response to yours of 28 April on behalf of the Committee of Public Accounts.

The Secretary General confirmed that this Department complies with Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 by reporting annually on the protected disclosures received and that we do this through each year's formal Annual Report.

Since then, we have taken those reports and created standalone reports for each year so that they are easier to find on the DAFM website (part of Gov.ie). I have updated the previously submitted table accordingly.

If you require any further information or clarification, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Padraig

Padraig McMahon
Príomhoifigeach, Rannóige Gnóthaí Corparáideacha
Principal Officer, Corporate Affairs Division

**Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Protected Disclosures Act 2014**

Year	Number	Action Taken	Current Status	Section 22 Reporting
2014 & 2015	Nil	N/A	N/A	DAFM Website's Protected Disclosures Annual Reports Page. <i>[All PD Annual Reports available here.]</i>
2016	3	<p>One case was reviewed and accepted as meeting the criteria for a Protected Disclosure. Following investigation, the case was formally closed in February 2017 with the agreement of the discloser.</p> <p>One case was reviewed and accepted as meeting the criteria for a Protected Disclosure. The substance of the disclosure was then transferred for investigation. Following that investigation, the finding was appealed to the Workplace Relations Commission but then withdrawn by the discloser in October 2017.</p> <p>One case was reviewed and accepted as meeting the criteria for a Protected Disclosure. Following investigation, the substance of the disclosure was deemed to be without foundation.</p>	All closed	<p>DAFM Website's Protected Disclosures Annual Reports Page.</p> <p><i>[All PD Annual Reports available here.]</i></p> <p>Also:</p> <p>DAFM Annual Report 2016 <i>[All Annual Reports available here.]</i></p>

2017	2	<p>One case was reviewed and accepted as meeting the criteria for a Protected Disclosure. The substance of the disclosure was then transferred for investigation, following which the case was withdrawn by the discloser in August 2018.</p> <p>One case was reviewed and accepted as meeting the criteria for a Protected Disclosure. The substance of the disclosure was then passed to an Assistant Secretary for investigation. The ASG was been in contact with the discloser in relation to how the matter could be progressed in accordance with their wishes, while balancing the rights of others. Agreement could not be reached and the ASG had to finalise the investigation in November 2020. (See also 2020)</p>	All closed	<p>DAFM Website's Protected Disclosures Annual Reports Page.</p> <p><i>[All PD Annual Reports available here.]</i></p> <p>Also:</p> <p>DAFM Annual Report 2017 <i>[All Annual Reports available here.]</i></p>
2018	1	<p>The case was reviewed and accepted as meeting the criteria for a Protected Disclosure. The substance of the disclosure, which related to an agency, was then passed to an Assistant Secretary for investigation. The ASG has engaged with the relevant parties and is satisfied that progress was made on all the HR and governance issues that were the subject of the Disclosures. Correspondence issued to the disclosers in 2019, offering a meeting to discuss any outstanding concerns, should they wish to avail of an opportunity to do so. A final follow-up meeting was planned between the ASG and the disclosers but had to be postponed during 2020 due to Covid-19 public health restrictions.</p>	One case ongoing (pending final follow up meeting)	<p>DAFM Website's Protected Disclosures Annual Reports Page.</p> <p><i>[All PD Annual Reports available here.]</i></p> <p>Also:</p> <p>DAFM Annual Report 2018 <i>[All Annual Reports available here.]</i></p>
2019	2	<p>Both cases were from the same individual but covered separate matters. The confidential recipient decided that both might constitute Protected Disclosures and forwarded them to the</p>	All closed	<p>DAFM Website's Protected Disclosures Annual Reports Page.</p>

		<p>Personnel Officer for consideration as to whether either warranted further action. The Personnel Officer concluded that both matters related to historic (HR) grievances and required no further action. The discloser was informed of the outcome.</p>		<p><i>[All PD Annual Reports available here.]</i></p> <p>Also:</p> <p>DAFM Annual Report 2019 <i>[All Annual Reports available here.]</i></p>
2020	4	<p>One case related to the results and subsequent events around an inspection from several years previously. The disclosure was investigated by the Head of Corporate Affairs who found that there was not any wrongdoing as described. The investigation was completed, and discloser informed in March 2021.</p> <p>One case was received in December 2020 and allocated to an ASG for investigation. The matter is ongoing.</p> <p>One case concerned allegations around the dropping of a court case but following investigation by an ASG no wrongdoing was found.</p> <p>One case was one which had been received in 2018. It had not been acted upon due to ongoing court cases on essentially the same topic and the discloser withdrawing another protected disclosure covering the same topic. Following an internal review of the matter in 2020, the Department commenced an investigation into the disclosure. To avoid a conflict of interest the case has been referred to an independent external investigator.</p>	Two cases are closed and two cases are ongoing	<p>DAFM Website's Protected Disclosures Annual Reports Page.</p> <p><i>[All PD Annual Reports available here.]</i></p> <p>Also:</p> <p>To be published as part of the DAFM Annual Report 2020 <i>[Will shortly available here.]</i></p>

2021	1	One case has been received and allocated to an official for review.		The report covering this and any further protected disclosures received in 2021 will be published next year.
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