

Protected Disclosures to HIQA (external channel and procedure) – Policy

1. Introduction

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is committed to maintaining a responsible and ethical culture with the highest standards of honesty, integrity, accountability and compliance.

This policy and accompanying Protected Disclosures to HIQA (external channel and procedure) – Procedure has been developed in accordance with the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, as amended (the Act).

2. Scope

This policy applies to all ‘workers’¹ who can make a protected disclosure to the CEO of HIQA as a prescribed person² under Statutory Instrument SI367//2020.

The policy relates to the reporting of a relevant wrongdoing as defined in the Act.

3. Policy Statement

It is the policy of HIQA to create a culture that encourages ‘workers’, to make a protected disclosure about a ‘relevant wrongdoing’ to the CEO of HIQA, as a prescribed person, relating to services within HIQA’s regulatory remit in a manner that maintains their confidentiality.

The prescribed person is committed to ensuring that all ‘workers’ who contact the prescribed person are listened to and relevant actions are taken to address the concerns, as appropriate and or that the information is referred, in line with the legislation, to another prescribed person and or the Office of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner.

The CEO will appoint an impartial designated person(s) who has the appropriate independence, knowledge and expertise to operate the external channel procedures correctly.

¹ See definition of “worker” in Appendix 1 of the Protected Disclosures to HIQA (external channel and procedure) – Procedure

² See definition of “prescribed person” in Appendix 1 of the Protected Disclosures to HIQA (external channel and procedure) – Procedure

The designated person(s) will support the reporting person by providing information on the external disclosure process, receive and follow up on reports, maintain communication with the reporting person and, where necessary, request further information from and provide feedback to the reporting person.

The established external channels and systems used to receive and store relevant information and records for 'workers' making protected disclosures uphold the requirements of the legislation to protect the identity of the 'worker' and other persons concerned.

HIQA's Protected Disclosures to HIQA (external channel and procedure) – Procedure sets out in detail the external channels open to 'workers' to make a protected disclosure, the alternative options available for making a report and the protections available for these 'reporting persons'.

The Protected Disclosures Internal Channel Policy and Procedure applies to workers who wish to make a protected disclosure about relevant wrongdoing in HIQA to HIQA.

4. Responsibilities

| Role | Description |
|--------------------|---|
| All workers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All workers should have an understanding of the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act and HIQA's role as a prescribed person. All potential protected disclosures brought to the attention of staff as part of their work in HIQA should be signposted to the prescribed person's designated officer either by email protecteddisclosures@hiqa.ie or by phone 01 814 7635. |
| Designated officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect the identity of the reporting person and any third party mentioned in the report Acknowledge receipt of the disclosure Carry out an initial assessment to examine what actions the prescribed person needs to take to deal with the matter Refer information that is not within HIQA's regulatory remit to another relevant prescribed person or the Protected Disclosures Commissioner If considered necessary, referring the matter to the appropriate point in HIQA for investigation Provide timely feedback or outcome of assessment to the reporting person. |

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| Chief Executive Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint impartial designated officers • Ensure designated officers are appropriately trained • Ensure the relevant information as set out in S.22 of the Act is provided to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform by 1 March annually • Ensure that an annual report for the previous calendar year, containing the relevant information as set out in the Act, is published on the HIQA website no later than 31 March. |
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5. Revision History

| Revision number | Description of change | Effective from date |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1.0 | Initial version | 1 January 2023 |
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