

# Chester Beatty Library

## Protected Disclosures Policy and Procedure

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Protected Disclosures Act 2014 (the “Act”) came into effect on 15 July 2014. The Library has put in place this policy in order to meet its requirements under the Act. This policy applies to ‘workers’, which under the Act includes employees or former employees, independent contractors, agency staff, persons on work experience, volunteers and suppliers.
- 1.2 This policy focuses on addressing issues of relevant wrongdoing (as defined in the Act) <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2014/en/act/pub/0014/index.html> which are in the public interest. There is an important distinction to be made between raising a concern regarding relevant wrongdoings as defined in the Act, covered by this policy and other issues that may be raised relating to the normal business of the Library or workers’ personal circumstances which do not fall under this policy.
- 1.3 Concerns in relation to day to day operational matters should, in the normal course of events, be brought to the attention of the relevant supervisor and dealt with accordingly, or through agreed structures already established by the Library (for example, health & safety matters should be addressed through the procedures established in the Library’s Safety Statement). Similar considerations apply to grievances or allegations relating to matters such as harassment/bullying which are not covered by this policy, and which will remain to be dealt with under the Library’s Respect and Dignity at Work/Anti-Bullying and Harassment policy and/or Grievance and Disciplinary procedures. If a worker is uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy, they should seek advice from the Designated Officer(s) as set out in 5.1. of this document.
- 1.4 Workers should note that this policy does not form part of any contract of employment, thus it may be amended by the Library from time to time.

### 2. Purpose of the Policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is:
- I. To outline procedures and provide guidance for workers to report any concerns they may have regarding a relevant wrongdoing in the workplace;
  - II. To highlight that it is always appropriate to raise concerns a worker may have about a relevant wrongdoing when they are based on a reasonable belief irrespective of whether any relevant wrongdoing is in fact subsequently identified; and
  - III. To reassure workers that they can report relevant wrongdoings without fear of suffering any detriment as a result.

### 3. Definitions

- 3.1 Protected Disclosure:

A Protected Disclosure is defined in the Act as a disclosure of relevant information which, in the reasonable belief of the worker, tends to show one or more 'relevant wrongdoings', which came to the attention of the worker in connection with the worker's employment and is disclosed in the manner prescribed in the Act. The following matters are relevant wrongdoings for the purposes of the 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, or
- (h) 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.

**3.2** A 'protected disclosure' under this policy may be about a relevant wrongdoing:

- (a) that is occurring now;
- (b) happened in the past; and/or
- (c) may happen in the future.

#### **4. Reasonable Belief**

**4.1** The 2014 Act provides that the motivation for making the disclosure is irrelevant, as long as a worker has a reasonable belief that the disclosure they are making is true and falls into one of the categories of relevant wrongdoings listed above.

#### **5. Procedure for Making a Disclosure**

**5.1** Any worker who has a reasonable belief in relation to one or more of the relevant wrongdoings set out above should make the disclosure, in the first instance, to the Designated Officer(s).

The Library has appointed the following persons to receive protected disclosures raised in accordance with this policy. The contact details for the Designated Officer(s) are as follows:

Designated Officer(s)	Telephone number	Email address
HR Manager		
Head of Operations and Administration		
Director		

**5.2** Where the discloser is the Director or where the concern relates to the Director, he/she should make the disclosure to the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee.

**5.3** A disclosure under this policy should be made in writing and the worker will need to be able to demonstrate and support the reasons for his/her concerns and provide evidence of his/her concerns where such evidence is available. Any written disclosure should be factual (to the best of the individual's knowledge) and should address the following key points to the extent that such information is known to the individual in relation to a wrongdoing that has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur:

- (i) what has occurred;
- (ii) when and where it occurred;
- (iii) who was involved;
- (iv) whether the Library has been put at risk or suffered loss as a result;
- (v) has it happened before;
- (vi) are there any witnesses;
- (vii) any supporting information/documents;
- (viii) how the matter came to light; and
- (iv) any other relevant material.

**5.4** A worker intending to raise a concern should not carry out an investigation outside of the normal scope of his/her duties with a view to seeking to confirm relevant wrongdoing.

**6. Procedure for Receiving a Disclosure**

**6.1** The recipient of a disclosure under this policy and any other individual to whom the disclosure is referred in the performance of that employee/person's duties, must take all reasonable steps to avoid disclosing to another person any information that might identify the person by whom the disclosure was made.

**6.2** The recipient of a disclosure should undertake an initial evaluation following which he/she will advise the discloser as to whether the matter requires an investigation in accordance with the Act. In the event that the recipient is of the view that any further investigation is not required, the recipient should advise the discloser of

his/her assessment and the basis for this assessment, insofar as it possible. If it is clear that the concern falls more appropriately within a different policy /procedure of the Library, the worker will be informed that it should progress in accordance with that policy.

- 6.3 All persons who are in receipt of disclosures under this policy must advise the Director or the Chair of the Audit & Finance Committee in the Library of the receipt of the disclosure, the nature of the information contained in the disclosure and the decision transmitted to the discloser

**7. Investigation of a Disclosure**

- 7.1 Where the recipient of a disclosure forms the view that a full investigation is required he/she should appoint such person or persons internally (which may include the recipient if appropriate) who are most appropriately based to carry out the investigation or arrange for the appointment of an external investigator to carry out the investigation. The fact of such an investigation taking place will be reported to the Director and the Chair of the Audit & Finance Committee both of whom will also be advised of the outcome and any recommendations arising and provided with the copy of any report prepared by the investigator(s).

- 7.2 The discloser will be advised of the progress and outcome of the investigation, as appropriate, having regard to the nature of the matters investigated. The worker should treat any information about the investigation as strictly confidential. Any breach of this confidentiality may result in disciplinary action.

- 7.3 As it is not possible to know at the time whether the disclosure will subsequently be deemed protected under the Act, written records, including timelines, in relation to any disclosure and investigation undertaken, under this policy should be maintained.

**8. Taking Matters Further**

- 8.1 Having already made the disclosure to the Designated Officer(s), if a worker is dissatisfied with the response provided by the Library, he/she can *then* refer the matter to the Chair of the Audit & Finance Committee.

Person	Telephone number	Email address
Chair of Audit & Finance Committee		

**9. Confidentiality**

- 9.1 The Library does not encourage workers to make disclosures anonymously as proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if the Library cannot obtain further information from him/her. It is also more difficult to establish whether allegations are credible and impossible to afford a worker the protections under the Act if his or her identity is not known.

- 9.2 If a worker asks the Library to protect his/her identity by keeping his/her identity confidential, the Library will endeavour to do so. However, the Library cannot

guarantee full anonymity and the identity of a worker may need to be disclosed in certain circumstances for example, for or where:

- a. the effective investigation of the relevant wrongdoing concerned;
- b. the prevention of serious risk to the security of the State, public health, public safety or the environment; or
- c. the prevention of crime or prosecution of a criminal offence; or
- d. the disclosure is otherwise necessary in the public interest or is required by law.

## **10. False Allegations**

- 10.1** If a worker makes a report in accordance with this policy, but the information or allegation is subsequently not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the person making the disclosure. The worker will be fully protected from any less favourable treatment, penalisation or victimisation.
- 10.2** The motive of the person making the disclosure is not relevant but if an allegation known to be false is made maliciously, then disciplinary action may be taken.
- 10.3** If, following the investigation into the matter, no wrongdoing is found to have occurred and the disclosed is assessed not to have had a reasonable belief in making the allegation of wrongdoing he/she will be referred to the HR Manager with a view to considering whether disciplinary proceedings ought to be pursued against the person concerned.

## **11. A Worker who is the Subject of a Disclosure**

- 11.1** A worker who is the subject of a disclosure is entitled to fair treatment and should be made aware of and given the opportunity to respond to allegations against them. Such individual should treat any information about the investigation as strictly confidential. Any breach of this confidentiality may result in disciplinary action. While an investigation is on-going, all reasonable steps will be taken to protect the confidentiality of those who are the subject of allegations in a Protected Disclosure pending the outcome of the investigation.

## **12. Protection from dismissal/penalisation**

- 12.1** A worker, who has a reasonable belief in the occurrence of a serious wrongdoing in connection with his/her employment and discloses that concern, will not be penalised for the making of that disclosure, even if no investigation subsequently takes place, or where an investigation does take place, the investigation finds that no wrongdoing occurred. This undertaking extends to any other worker who is required to provide information in relation to matters raised as a consequence of the disclosure.
- 12.2** The Library will not tolerate or permit any form of detrimental treatment as a result of a disclosure of a reasonably held concern of a relevant wrongdoing and shall take

all appropriate action to support any worker who raises such concern. Accordingly appropriate disciplinary action shall be taken in accordance with the Library's policies and procedures against any employee who is found to have subjected a worker to detrimental treatment for having made a disclosure in accordance with this policy. If a worker believes that he/she has suffered any such treatment, he/she should inform the Designated Officer(s) immediately. If the matter is not remedied, the worker should raise it formally using the Library's Grievance Policy.

### **13. External Disclosures**

The purpose of this Policy is to provide an internal mechanism for making disclosures, reporting concerns, and investigating and remedying wrongdoing. In most cases, a worker should not find it necessary to contact anyone externally.

However there may be circumstances in when a worker can and must properly report issues externally to outside bodies to include regulators and/or An Garda Síochána.

Before a Relevant Person makes a disclosure or report a concern to any external, person or body the Library strongly encourages him/her to seek advice from the Designated Officer(s).

If a Relevant Person has a concern about wrongdoing relating to the conduct or actions of a third party, to include a customer, supplier or service provider, the Library encourages him/her to first report such concerns internally within the Library under this policy.

### **14. Recording and Tracking**

**14.1** The recipient of a protected disclosure under this policy shall provide details and the outcome (including any report) of all disclosures brought to his/her attention to the Audit and Finance Committee.

**14.2** The Audit and Finance Committee will review all outcomes related to this policy and report to the Chair of the Board of the Library on an annual basis.

### **15. Monitoring of the Policy and External Reporting Obligations**

**15.1** Chester Beatty Library shall prepare and publish a report detailing the number of protected disclosures made to Chester Beatty Library in the immediately preceding year, any action taken to those protected disclosures and such other information relating to the protected disclosures and the action taken as may be requested by the Minister from time to time.

**15.2** The Policy will be reviewed every three years.