



Checklist: Am I ready to make a protected disclosure?

This checklist will assist if you are considering making a protected disclosure about serious wrongdoing in your workplace, or wondering whether you need more information and guidance. It is intended to identify things you should think about before making a decision about what to do. It applies if you work in both the public and private (including not-for-profit) sectors.

For more information, see the *Ombudsman's Guide to Making a Protected Disclosure*.

Do I meet the basics?

- I am an **employee**:
 - Currently or formerly employed by the organisation.
 - Contracted or seconded to the organisation.
 - Involved in the management of the organisation (for example, on the Board).
 - Volunteering for the organisation.
 - A member of the Armed Forces.
- The information I have relates to **serious wrongdoing**:
 - Unlawful, corrupt, or irregular use of public sector funds or resources.
 - Something that is a serious risk to public safety, public health, or the environment (including in the private sector).
 - Something that is a serious risk to the maintenance of the law, including the prevention and detection of offences, the investigation of offences, and the right to a fair trial (including in the private sector).
 - Something that is a criminal offence (including in the private sector).
 - Conduct by public officials that is oppressive, improperly discriminatory, grossly negligent, or gross mismanagement.

- I want the serious wrongdoing to be **investigated**.
- I want to be protected** by the Protected Disclosures Act.
 - I want my identity to remain confidential.
 - I want to be sure that disciplinary action, or civil or criminal action won't be taken against me because I have disclosed the information about serious wrongdoing.

You can [contact the Ombudsman](#) for information and guidance, or to confirm that these requirements are met.

Who do I make my protected disclosure to?

- If there are no internal procedures for protected disclosures in my workplace, I can make my disclosure to the head of my workplace.
- If there are **internal workplace procedures**, I have checked them and identified who I should make my disclosure to.
- The person I need to report to is involved in the serious wrongdoing or has a relationship with the person who is involved in the serious wrongdoing. I will need to report the **head of my workplace**.
- I should make my disclosure **outside of the workplace** if:
 - The head of my workplace is involved or might be involved in the serious wrongdoing.
 - There is urgency or some exceptional circumstance.
 - I have reported to my workplace but nothing has happened within 20 working days.

Are you confused about where to go? [Contact the Ombudsman](#) for information and guidance.

Making the protected disclosure

- I have taken note of how my workplace's internal procedures tell me to make my protected disclosure (for example: specific email address, by letter, in a meeting).
- I've considered any concerns that I have about negative effects after I make my disclosure, and whether I want to talk about these when I make my disclosure.
 - I can explain when I make my disclosure any concerns I have about keeping my identity confidential.
 - I have considered whether I would like some other kind of support, for example a person in the workplace I can talk to, or access to an employee assistance programme.

I've made my protected disclosure, and now I'm worried

- My workplace has said that my **disclosure is not protected** – what do I do?
- My workplace has told me that **I will need to be identified** – what do I do?
- I'm worried that **I'm being treated badly** because I have spoken up – what do I do?

The Ombudsman is available to provide confidential assistance throughout the process of making a protected disclosure.

If you're concerned about how your protected disclosure is being handled, negative effects that you think are occurring, or you just need further information and guidance, you can [contact the Ombudsman](#).