

## **Annual Report of the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC) 2018**

(In accordance with section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014)

### **1. Caseloads up to 2018**

As in previous years, under section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 each public body is required to publish an annual report outlining the number of protected disclosures received in the preceding year and the action taken (if any). This report must not result in the identification of persons making disclosures. This is the third annual report from GSOC and it covers the period of 01 January 2018 to 31 December 2018.

There were **22** disclosures made to GSOC under sections 7 and 8 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, in the period covered by the 2017 report. GSOC had also previously reported in 2016, that there were nine open disclosure cases bringing the total number of cases on hand to **31**. Of these, six were closed, where further examination was not necessary or reasonably practicable. The remaining **25** continued undergoing examination or investigation.

### **2. Disclosures in 2018**

In the time covered by this report, **24** disclosures were made to GSOC under sections 7 and 8 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014. This brought the total number of investigations on hand to **49**.

### **3. Actions taken**

During 2018, **13** cases were discontinued following a combination of factors. A decision by GSOC to discontinue an examination or investigation can be made for varying reasons. For example, if following an examination, the matter falls outside of the parameters set in section 5(3) of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, or it is not in the public interest to investigate the matter. It may also be decided that it is not necessary or reasonably practicable to proceed if the matters are already under investigation by a statutory agency, or information about the matter is already in the public domain through a process such as court proceedings. On occasion, the discloser may have provided third or fourth hand information with no prospect of GSOC identifying the source or GSOC may have no statutory investigative powers to investigate the matters disclosed.

At any stage a discloser can withdraw or disengage from the process. A discloser can decide to focus their efforts on other internal or external processes available to them.

The remaining **36** cases were undergoing investigation or examination at the end of 2018.

#### **4. GSOC's Protected Disclosures Unit**

In March 2018 the first full time GSOC investigators were allocated to the new GSOC Protected Disclosures Unit following its establishment and a recruitment process run by the Public Appointments Service (PAS).

Sanction had been given the previous year (2017) by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) for five staff for the unit, and the recruitment of an additional five people was authorised in November 2018.

The year ended with four investigating officers, including the senior investigating officer who heads the unit, and one support officer. Following a period of training, these investigators have begun the full time task of conducting examinations and investigations into matters received under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014. The remaining positions continue to be filled into 2019.

*28 March 2019*