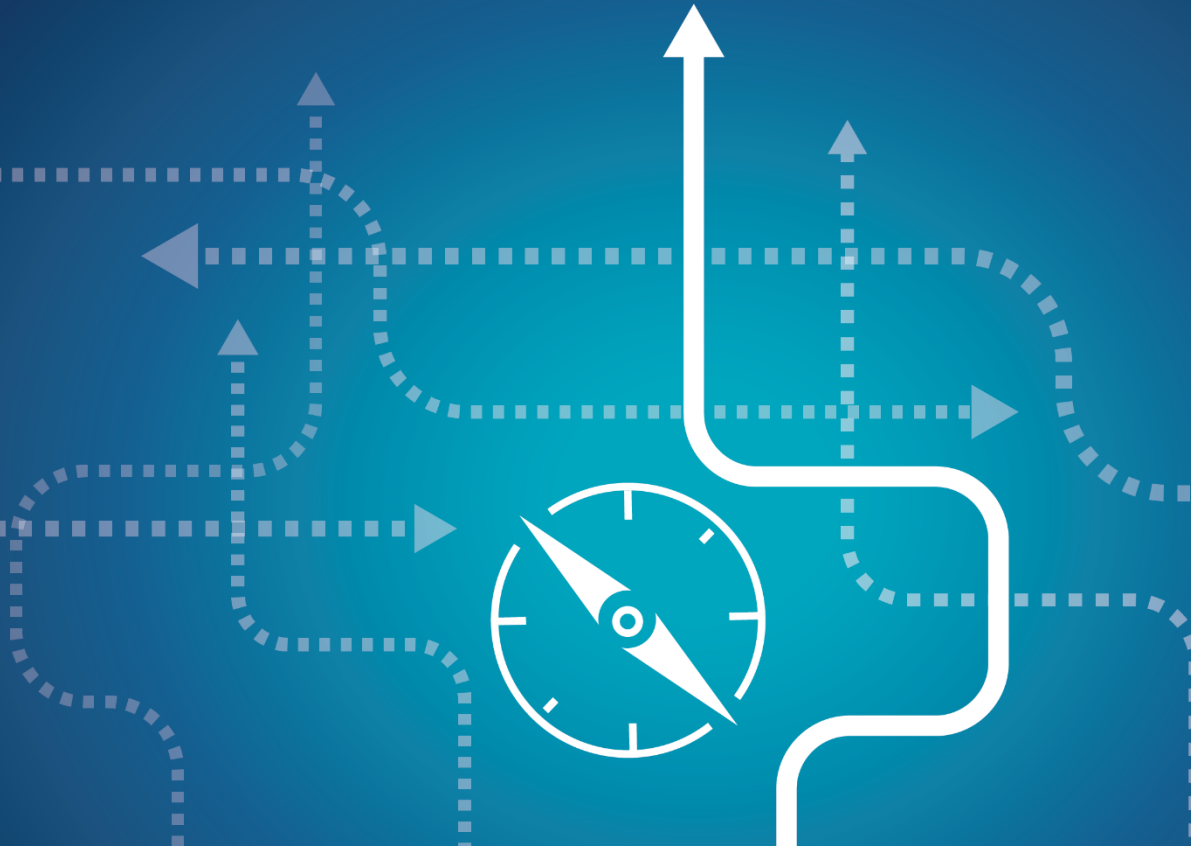


Ethics in the BC Public Service

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022



Where ideas work

Table of Contents

Executive Message	3
Ethics in the BC Public Service	4
Ethics at Work	4
Integrity and Corporate Values at Work	4
Ethical Leadership in the BCPS	6
Governance Structure	6
Corporate Ethics Governance Council	6
Corporate Ethics Lead Role and Function.....	6
Ethics Management Framework.....	7
Building an Ethical Culture in the BCPS	8
Establishing the Foundation	8
Standards of Conduct for BCPS Employees	8
Annual Review of the Oath of Employment and Standards of Conduct.....	9
Communications, Outreach and Training.....	10
Ethics Communications and Resources	10
Ethics Outreach	12
Ethics Training.....	12
Compliance Courses	12
Work Environment Survey	13
Ethics Risk Assessment	15
Ethics Advisory Service	15
Inquiries and Trends	16
Public Interest Disclosure Act	18

Accessing Online Content	18
Public Interest Disclosure Act Annual Reporting	20
Agency Designated Officer Responsibilities	20
PIDA Disclosures	21
Disclosures from 2020 to 2021	22
Disclosures from 2021 to 2022	22
Emerging Themes and Future Activities.....	22
BC Ombudsperson PIDA Recommendations and Findings.....	23
Ethics in the BCPS: Next Steps	24
Appendix A: Ethics and PIDA Resources and Links	25
Key references and resources related to ethics and PIDA in the BCPS.	25
Legislation	25
Ethics Information and Advisory Service	25
PIDA Information and Resources	26
Independent Office Reports.....	26



Executive Message



Once again, the BC Public Service has faced many challenges due to COVID-19 and weather-related crises. And once again, employees rose to each challenge, responding with kindness, respect and tremendous professionalism. It is a testament to the BC Public Service and our strong ethical culture that employees have assisted citizens of British Columbia with such a high level of service in their times of need.

I am pleased to introduce the second annual report that explores ethics in the BC Public Service. This report outlines the key components of our corporate ethics program and speaks to the commitments we made last year. As in last year's report, the annual ethics report for 2021 – 2022 includes the BC Public Service reporting related to and required under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act* (PIDA). This legislation came into effect in December 2019, providing an opportunity to strengthen ethics with an additional mechanism for disclosure in cases of serious wrongdoing and protection against reprisals for those disclosing the information. We have

chosen to include this reporting here as PIDA provides employees with an additional option to report serious concerns and encourages employees to speak up when they see something that doesn't seem right.

We are committed to developing an ethical culture in the BC Public Service and I want all employees to feel comfortable asking questions and seeking clarity if they have a concern. I am encouraged by the data presented in this report and by the results of the 2022 Work Environment Survey for the ethics-related questions. The data and results indicate that employees know where to go if they have questions and have clarity on ethical expectations at work. Increasingly, employees also agree that their supervisors support them in making ethical decisions and to serve with integrity. The increases in these areas in the latest survey are even more profound given the challenges we've faced over the past two years. I am keen to learn how we can continue to build and support an organizational culture where you feel safe to speak up, asking questions and raising concerns, and further the work that has been done to date.

Lori Wanamaker

Deputy Minister to the Premier,
Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Public Service



Ethics in the BC Public Service

Ethics and integrity have always been important to the BC Public Service (BCPS), and they remain even more important to us today. They feature prominently in the 2020 Corporate Plan, and we continue to promote and share their importance in communications, outreach and training activities across the BCPS. But how do we define them in the BC Public Service?

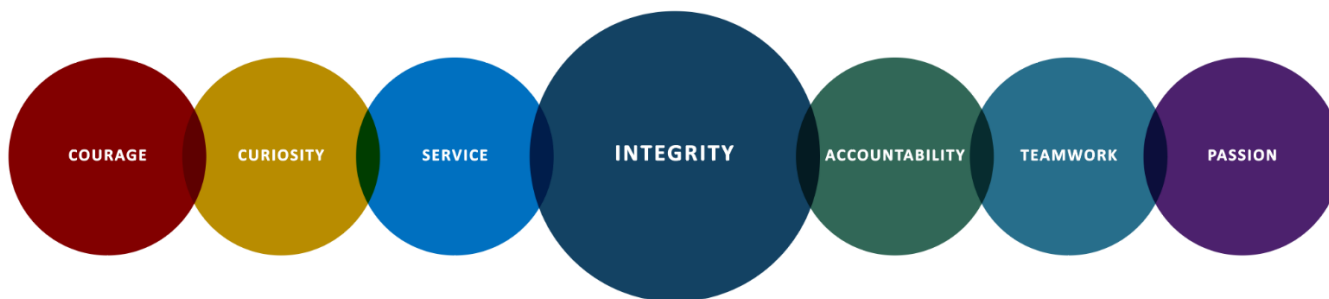
Ethics at Work

Ethics is often defined as the moral principles that guide a person's behaviour or activity. Conversations of ethics raise topics such as equity, fairness, justice and values. These are subjective terms that can mean something different to each person. But in the BCPS context, we have guidance through the Oath of Employment, Standards of Conduct and Corporate Values to help define the ethics of the workplace.

Employees begin their journey with the BCPS by affirming or swearing the Oath of Employment and confirming that they have read the Standards of Conduct, setting the foundation for their ethical conduct in the BCPS by establishing they understand the expectations that guide our day-to-day work and interactions with each other and with citizens.

Integrity and Corporate Values at Work

In addition to the Oath of Employment and the Standards of Conduct, the BCPS has one overarching corporate value, **Integrity**, and six core corporate values: **Curiosity, Service, Passion, Teamwork, Accountability and Courage**.



These principles describe the qualities we value in our colleagues and our organization. They were chosen after consultation and discussion with employees across government.

Integrity is above all the other values as a quality that affirms the Standards of Conduct for the BCPS.

Integrity, curiosity, service, passion, teamwork, accountability and courage shape our culture and help to:

- Foster practices that build a positive work culture
- Establish a single-employer identity
- Define shared expectations
- Maintain consistency of management practices
- Improve organizational performance

Ethical Leadership in the BCPS



The BCPS has established clear roles and responsibilities for providing ethical leadership across the organization.

Governance Structure

In February 2018, the Deputy Ministers Council (DMC) agreed to assign the role of corporate ethics lead to the Deputy Minister of the BC Public Service Agency (BCPSA). It was also decided that overall leadership and direction for ethics would be led in partnership with two other central agency deputy ministers (Finance and Citizens' Services) to reflect the BCPS integrated ethics management framework.

Corporate Ethics Governance Council

The deputy ministers representing three central agencies comprise the Corporate Ethics Governance Council. The Council has an overarching mandate for ethics and compliance management in the BCPS. It is responsible for the coordination, management and oversight of the integrated ethics framework to ensure government is meeting its core human resources policy objective that "all public service employees will exhibit the highest standards of conduct."

Corporate Ethics Lead Role and Function

The Deputy Minister of the BCPSA is the Corporate Ethics Lead in the BCPS. The lead is a member of the Corporate Ethics Governance Council and is responsible for the duties and functions described in the above section. However, the lead also has additional, unique responsibilities and functions as the corporate ethics program team reports through the BCPSA.

The corporate ethics program team is responsible for the ethics management framework in operations, supporting the Corporate Ethics Governance Council and ministry ethics advisors, developing and delivering outreach and communications, and monitoring and reporting.

Ethics Management Framework

To improve coordination and to better monitor, evaluate and report the results of our efforts to support ethical behaviour, the ethics management framework was developed. The framework represents an integrated approach, highlighting the roles and ethics-related responsibilities of the Office of the Comptroller General, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, the Corporate Information and Records Management Office, Treasury Board, the BCPSA and ministries.

The purpose of central co-ordinated ethics management is to set expectations of ethical behaviour and actively communicate and reinforce that behaviour, including how to support employees in choosing the right path. At a minimum, all leaders in our organization require an awareness of this framework and, most importantly, who to ask for advice or refer employees to when questions arise.



Figure 1: BC Public Service Ethics Management Framework

Building an Ethical Culture in the BCPS



Making ethical decisions in organizations has seldom been simple. It has become even more challenging as society becomes increasingly complex. With more people needing to collaborate more quickly, multiple competing interests and ever-changing priorities, it can be daunting to make the right ethical decision.

The following section describes the activities underway to promote awareness, knowledge and discussions of ethics and compliance in the BCPS, empowering employees to handle ethical dilemmas they encounter in everyday work.

Establishing the Foundation

The foundations of ethics in the BCPS are defined and outlined in the Oath of Employment and Standards of Conduct. Employees are expected to swear or affirm that they have reviewed and agree to abide by these terms and conditions when they begin their career in the BCPS.

Public Service Oath of Employment

The Oath obligates employees to act with integrity, putting the interests of the public service above their own personal interests and avoiding all conflicts of interest. The Oath also requires employees to safeguard confidential information, serve the government impartially, honestly and ethically, and to honour and faithfully abide by the Standards of Conduct for Public Service Employees.

Standards of Conduct for BCPS Employees

The Standards of Conduct establish expectations for all employees in the public service to support the core policy objective that “public service employees exhibit the highest standards of conduct.” The requirement to comply with the standards is a condition of employment and employees who fail to comply with the standards may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Under the Standards of Conduct, the Deputy Minister of the BCPSA is responsible for coordinating the development of awareness, training and communication programs in support of the Standards of Conduct and ethics related issues, and for providing advice to senior executives and

others, including ethics advisors, regarding the application of the standards. The standards also establish the key responsibilities of the deputy ministers, ethics advisors, managers and employees in relation to ensuring conduct and expectations are observed and upheld.¹

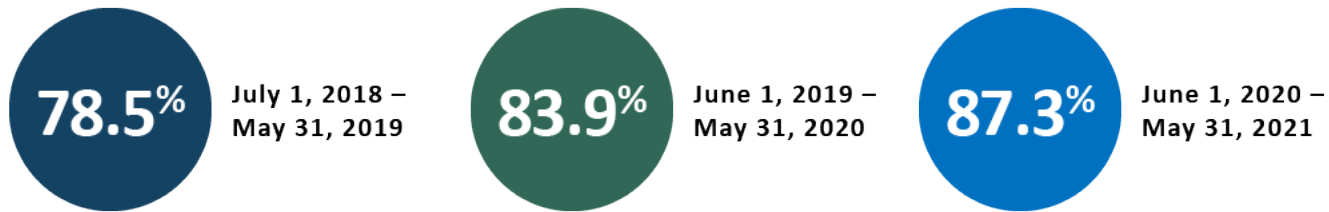
New “Welcome to the BC Public Service” and Oath of Employment ceremonies have been offered regularly in a virtual environment since 2020. The virtual environment has allowed employees from across BC to participate in ceremonies, and the technology has improved the accessibility and consistency for all participants.

Between April 1, 2021, and March 31, 2022, 2,702 new employees have participated in Oath of Employment ceremonies.

Annual Review of the Oath of Employment and Standards of Conduct

Each year, BCPS employees are expected to complete the Annual Review of the Oath of Employment and Standards of Conduct. This is to ensure that employees are familiar with any changes made to these core policies and foster understanding of the expectations and responsibilities of all employees to create a respectful workplace and ethical culture. In 2021, the Annual Review was amended to include the Appropriate Use Policy. The Appropriate Use Policy is a core document that must be reviewed and acknowledged when employees start their career in the BCPS. With an increasing emphasis and use on technology in everyday work, it is important that employees review this policy along with the other core policies each year. The compliance rates of the annual review for the first three years of the program are provided below. Work continues to develop awareness of the annual review and improve reporting capabilities for ministries.

Annual Review Compliance Rates



¹ There are some segments of the BCPS where employees have a unique Standards of Conduct (for example, BC Sherriff Service, BC Corrections, Liquor Distribution Branch) based on extraordinary duties and responsibilities related to their organizations. In these instances, these bodies have embedded the Standards of Conduct for BCPS Employees in their organization-specific codes of conduct and undertake activities to bring awareness of employment expectations and also complete their own annual review process.

Communications, Outreach and Training

Beyond the annual review activity, the BCPS has emphasized communications, outreach and training as a way to build an ethical culture across the organization. There is a commitment in the 2020 Corporate Plan to develop new ethics-related resources for BCPS employees. By putting time and energy into establishing familiarity with ethics and encouraging employees to speak up when they have concerns, the goal is to prevent misconduct and wrongdoing from occurring.

Ethics Communications and Resources

To ensure that there are constant and consistent communications about ethics across the BCPS, there is an overarching communications strategy with communications plans in place for distinct events, such as the annual review, and new initiatives in the BCPS such as the Fraud Toolkit introduced by the Ministry of Finance. There have been numerous executive messages, articles and videos posted to Compass, the BCPS intranet, that speak to ethics in the BCPS. These have reached thousands of employees and sought to develop awareness on many topics, including the Standards of Conduct, Conflict of Interest Guidelines, Social Media Guidelines and Appropriate Use of Technology policy.

A new policy on discrimination, bullying and harassment (HR Policy #11) was released in late 2021. This new policy reinforces the Standards of Conduct to align with the *Human Rights Code* and Occupational Health and Safety Regulations. Accompanying the new policy are several resources for employees to help address respectful workplace issues. These resources include checklists for employees and supervisors, and a frequently asked questions document.

Additionally, in response to the number of queries received by ethics advisors and through the AskMyHR portal, the corporate ethics program focused on conflict of interest in 2021. After consultations with employees and supervisors from 13 ministries, a new electronic disclosure form for conflicts of interest was launched. New web content was published on MyHR aimed at making the conflict of interest disclosure and assessment processes easier for employees and supervisors to follow. This fulfills a commitment made in the initial Ethics in the BC Public Service report last year.

In the first six months since launch, the new conflict of interest web content had over 3,000 individual visits, and 250 electronic forms were accessed.

Figure 2: Number of Visits to Ethics and Standards of Conduct on MyHR Website in 2020 to 2022

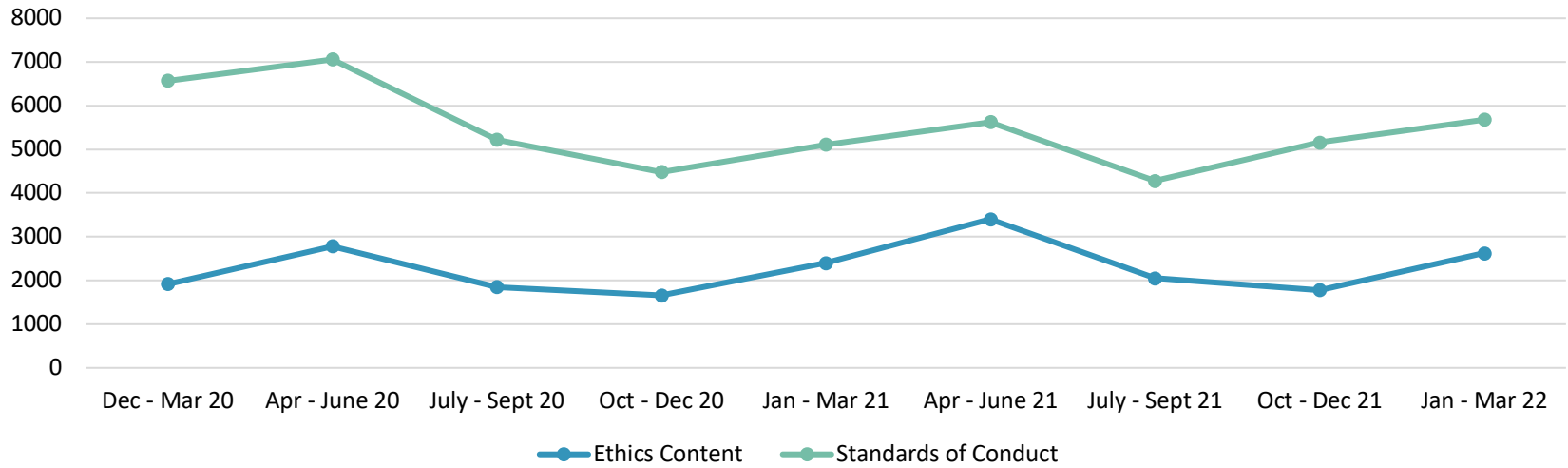
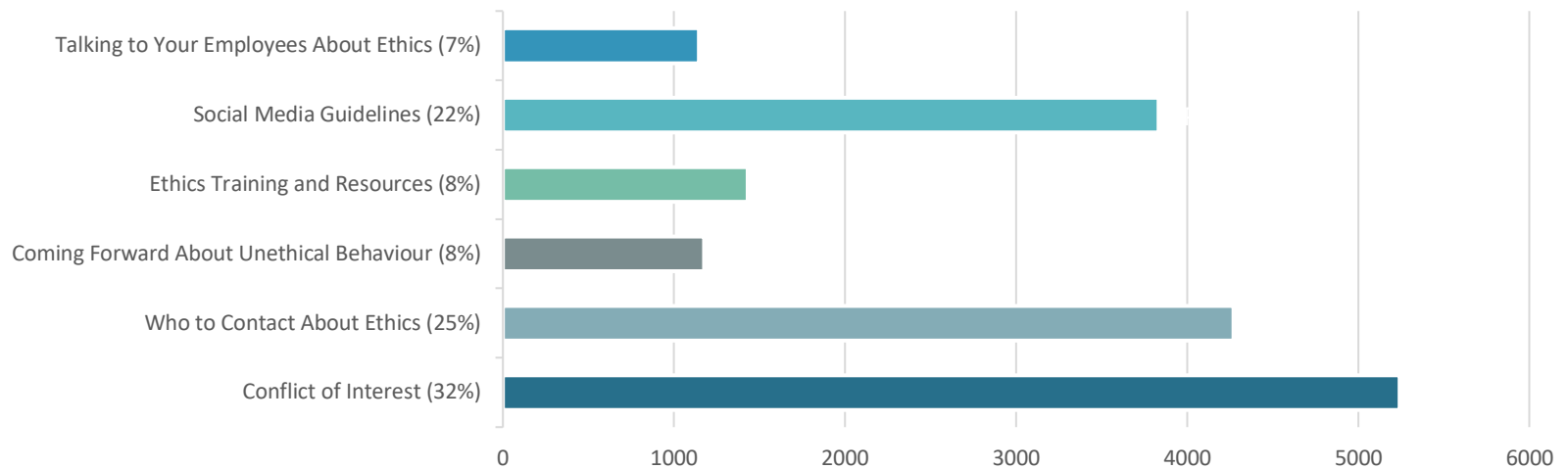


Figure 3: Breakdown of Visits for Ethics Content on MyHR Website in FY 2021 / 2022



Ethics Outreach

In addition to the communications and corporate training available to BCPS employees, there are also outreach sessions held each year delivered by ethics advisors and the BCPSA's corporate ethics team. Outreach can take many forms, from email correspondence to workshops (virtual and in-person) and focus on any number of topics, including ethics in the BCPS, the Standards of Conduct, PIDA, conflict of interest, social media guidelines and respectful workplaces. Hundreds of sessions have been held since 2018 and are available upon request by contacting your ministry ethics advisor or the corporate ethics program (ethics@gov.bc.ca).

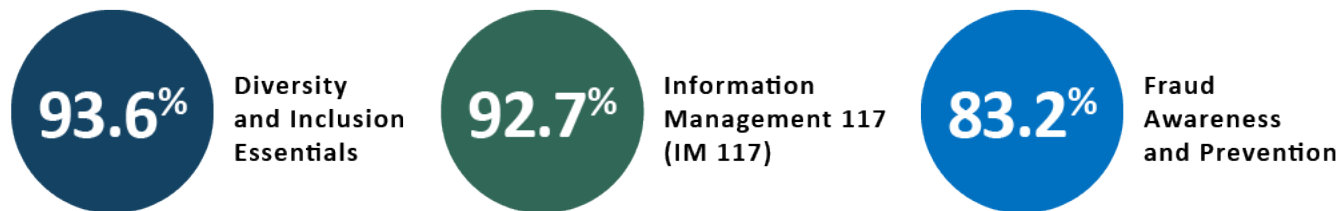
Ethics Training

In addition to the Annual Review of the Oath of Employment and Standards of Conduct, there are several required and optional ethics-related courses available corporately through the Learning Centre. These training opportunities are available to all employees through the Learning Catalogue and help increase awareness and knowledge of ethics in the BCPS. In 2021, efforts were aimed at the development of ethics training for senior leaders and corporate executive. There were two initial offerings of ethical leadership training for senior leaders (Bands 4 to 6) in 2021 – 2022, with over 100 participants in attendance. The ethics orientation for corporate executive has been developed and will be offered in spring 2022. The intention is to offer both courses on a regular basis to further strengthen ethical leadership among leaders and to contribute to the ethical culture of the BCPS.

Compliance Courses

In addition to the annual review, BCPS employees are now expected to complete three courses that further describe the expectations in the workplace. One course, Diversity and Inclusion Essentials, builds on the expectations set out in the Standards of Conduct and the responsibility BCPS employees share in fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace. Information Management 117 outlines our shared accountabilities and conduct when using information and technology at work. Fraud Awareness and Prevention was developed and launched in 2021 for the purposes of making employees aware of what constitutes fraud and how everyone can work to prevent it from occurring. The compliance rates for BCPS employees are highlighted below. As with the annual review, work continues to develop awareness of the compliance courses and improve reporting capabilities for ministries.

Compliance Rates (as of March 31, 2022)



Work Environment Survey

To determine the degree of success in building an ethical culture, BCPS leaders often look at the Work Environment Survey (WES). The survey was introduced in 2006 and is conducted every two years. In 2015, four ethics-related questions were added to WES. These questions assess employees' perceptions of ethics in the workplace (related to the respectful workplace driver) and supervisory-level management. In advance of the 2022 Work Environment Survey, the ethics-related questions were reviewed and revised for the purpose of simplifying language and clarifying the intent of the questions. One new question was introduced focusing on employees' perception of BCPS executive. The ethics-related questions and the percentile summary of scores for the overall BCPS are included below.

Question: Employees in my work unit are clear on the ethical values expected in performing their work.



Question: If I am faced with an ethical question or concern, I know where to go for help to resolve the situation. (2015, 2018, 2020)

Question: If I experience or learn about an ethical issue at work, I know where I can go for help. (2022)



Question: The person I report to maintains high standards of honesty and integrity.

78
2015

80
2018

82
2020

83
2022

Question: The person I report to supports me and my coworkers in conducting our work in an ethical manner.

79
2015

81
2018

82
2020

84
2022

Question: Executives in my organization act ethically (e.g., demonstrate honesty and integrity in their work).

N/A
2015

N/A
2018

N/A
2020

72
2022

Overall, the scores for the questions provide opportunities to leverage strengths and celebrate successes per the WES interpretation guide. For the three questions that remained unchanged, we have seen moderate increases since the introduction of the questions in 2015. For the question revised in 2022, it is encouraging that most employees know where to go if they encounter an ethical issue. There was a slight decrease in the response to the revised question (now at 80). It is possible that employees have responded differently to the question because of the new wording but it is difficult to determine by looking at the score alone. Efforts will continue to develop awareness of resources and supports for employees who encounter issues or have questions about conduct and workplace expectations. The results from the question about perceptions of executive are new and the score will be reviewed alongside other executive-level questions and drivers to understand the context and broader themes.

Ethics Risk Assessment

In the 2017 audit into ethics management in the BCPS, the Office of the BC Auditor General recommended that ministries should undertake an assessment of ethics risk. This is consistent with the BC Public Service Core Policy and Procedures Manual (CPPM) Chapter 14 (Risk Management) which notes that ministries are responsible for risk identification, prioritization and mitigation, implementation performance, and risk management maturity. Ministries must also compile and maintain ministry-level risk registers. This includes identifying and addressing ethics risks where applicable.

Consultation and work were undertaken to define ethics risk in the BCPS. The following definition was developed and embedded in ministry risk registers in December 2021:

In the BC Public Service, ethics risk is the potential for harm resulting from behaviour or conduct that contravenes the Oath of Employment or Standards of Conduct. The harms may be real, perceived or potential in nature and may affect the reputation or operations of the ministry and BC Public Service in a negative way.

The purpose of identifying ethics risk in the ministry risk registers is to not only highlight the importance of ethics in the BCPS, but it is also to have ministries discuss, identify and mitigate ethical risks that may arise in their unique work environment (e.g., corrections, compliance inspection, permitting, etc.). Further work will be undertaken with ministries in 2022 and 2023 to understand, identify and assess ethics risks in the BCPS.

Ethics Advisory Service

The BCPS uses multiple channels to communicate the expectations for conduct in the workplace and preventing misconduct from occurring. However, it is important for employees to have an alternative place to turn if they have questions or concerns about ethics issues.

Every ministry has an appointed ethics advisor. Ethics advisors act as points of contact for ethics-related queries, assist with ministry-specific follow-ups for ethics-related matters where necessary and participate in outreach activities in their ministries. Upon appointment, ethics advisors attend an orientation session within 30 days, and have access to ongoing support and regular training to ensure they can fulfill the responsibilities of the role.

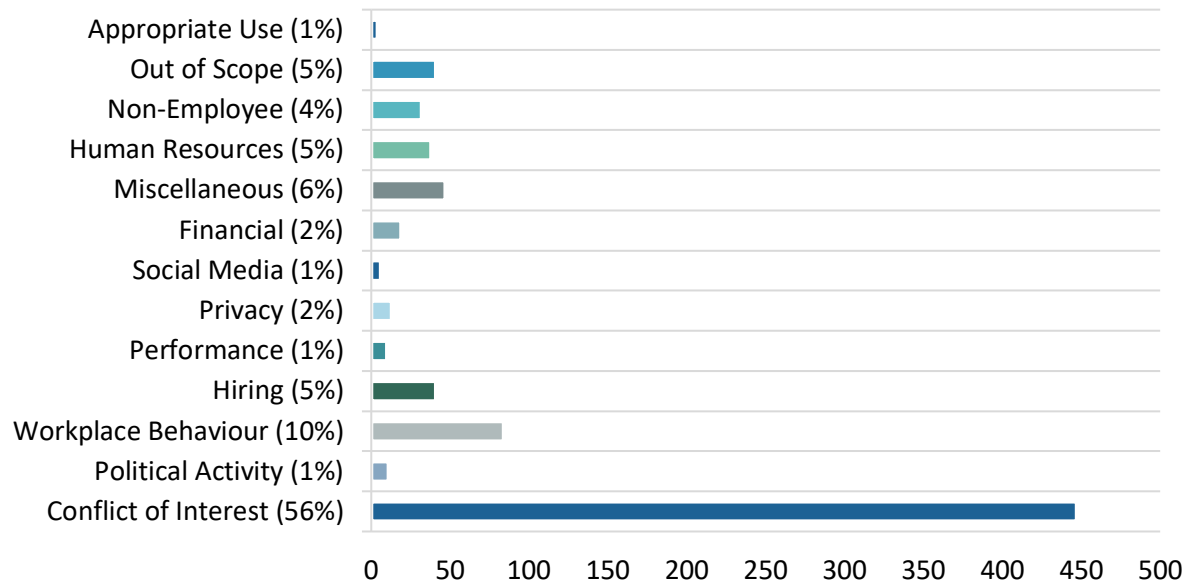
The role of the ethics advisor is assigned to a deputy minister, associate deputy minister, assistant deputy minister or executive lead position, reflecting their important role in communicating expectations, setting the tone for behaviour and shaping the organizational culture. They are also decision-makers who can act on most issues brought to their attention. Ethics advisors provide advice only to employees appointed under the *Public Service Act*.

Any BCPS employee is encouraged to contact their ministry ethics advisor if they have a concern or question related to the Standards of Conduct that they cannot take to their immediate supervisor, or if they wish to seek expert, impartial advice. Employees do not require permission from their supervisor or chain of command to contact the ethics advisor. Each advisor has a unique email address that only they can access, to ensure inquiries are kept confidential. If you reach out, the ethics advisor will contact you to follow up on your request and will work with you to connect you with the appropriate resources or help resolve your issue or question.

Inquiries and Trends

Since their introduction in 2018, the ethics advisors have received hundreds of inquiries from BCPS employees each year. On average, the ethics advisory service (all ethics advisors and the corporate ethics advisor at the BCPSA) receive 210 inquiries annually. Based on the data, the inquiries received through the ethics advisory service falls into several categories identified in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Ethics Inquiries (2018 to 2022) by Category



As noted in Figure 4, inquiries about real, perceived and potential conflicts of interest are dominant. These include general inquiries about disclosing a conflict of interest and where to find the guidelines and disclosure form, as well as advice on specific situations and circumstances.

Other categories of inquiries include workplace behaviour (concerns about conduct in the workplace), human resources (questions about human resource policies) and hiring (questions about hiring policies and practices). The miscellaneous requests include general questions about ethics, research inquiries and notes about the Annual Review of the Oath of Employment and Standards

of Conduct. Inquiries are often received from non-employees, or individuals who work outside of the BCPS.

There is dedicated support for the ethics advisory service and a commitment in the 2020 Corporate Plan to continue to build and enhance resources and support for ethics advisors in the future. Since the release of last year’s ethics report, several resources have been put in place to support ethics advisors. Resources and information about conflict of interest for employees and supervisors have been created on the MyHR website. A bi-annual ethics newsletter has been created to showcase some of the outstanding work ethics advisors have undertaken as part of their duties. Ministry ethics snapshots were created and shared with ethics advisors to help focus their outreach efforts. These ministry snapshots bring together compliance rates for mandatory training along with results from the four ethics-specific questions in WES. New snapshots will be compiled and shared in 2022 following the release of the results from the latest survey.

Public Interest Disclosure Act



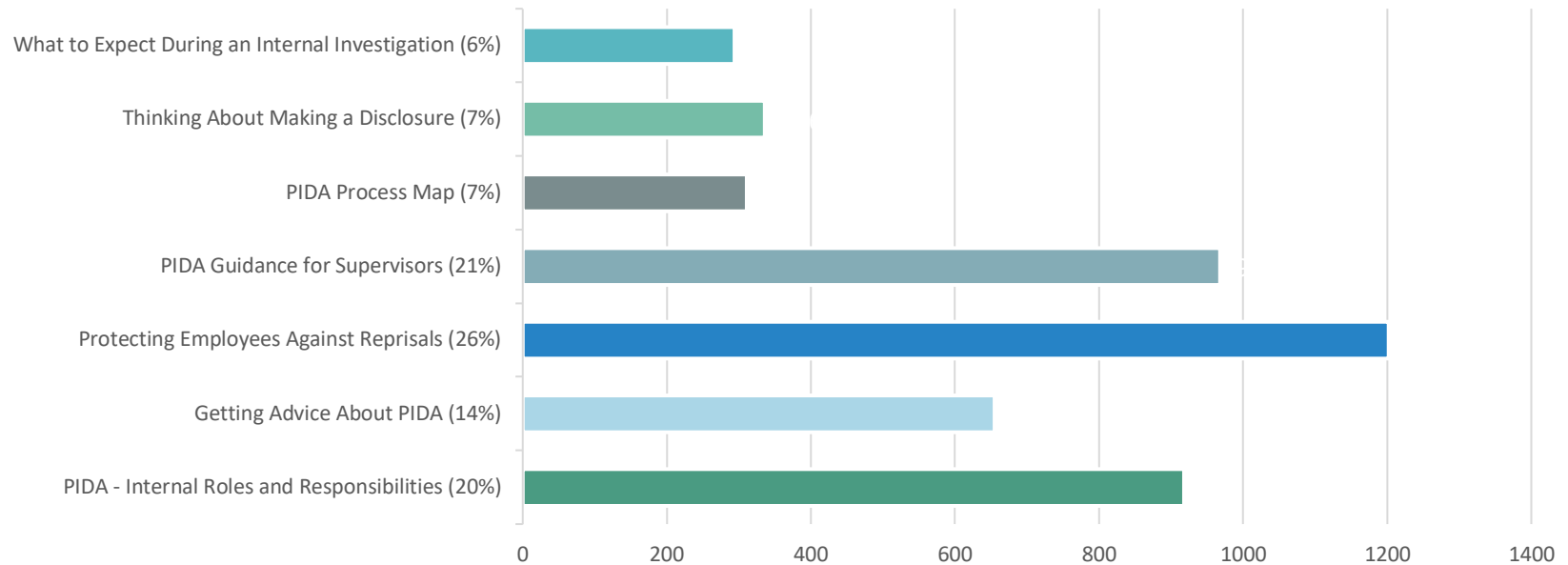
Speaking up when things aren't right demonstrates our public service values. Employees and supervisors have obligations under the Standards of Conduct to report and investigate concerns of wrongdoing and inappropriate conduct. The ethics advisory service was created to ensure employees have another avenue to ask questions or raise concerns if they cannot approach their supervisor or next level of excluded management. PIDA provides another option for employees of the BC Public Service to choose to report serious wrongdoing. The Act came into effect for employees in the BC Public Service on December 1, 2019.

Accessing Online Content

Extensive information and resources were created and made available online (see Appendix A for links) for all current and former employees. The web analytics reveals that the landing page for PIDA averages 300 views and 250 visits monthly.² This figure has been steadily increasing since the implementation of PIDA in 2019, which indicates that employee awareness of the legislation and its protections are growing.

² There are limitations of measuring website analytics. For example, these numbers may include multiple visits by the same user or include visits by non-public service employees. We have chosen to use the number of visits which indicate that the visitor stayed and clicked on content or links.

**Figure 5: PIDA Awareness-Building Quarterly Access Data from MyHR website
December 1, 2019 to March 31, 2022**



The analytics for individual pages further reveal that employees are accessing this information to learn more, as evident in Figure 5 (above). Additionally, all current BCPS employees receive information on PIDA through the Annual Review of the Oath of Employment and Standards of Conduct and must answer a question about PIDA as part of the annual review to demonstrate basic understanding and awareness of the legislation.

Public Interest Disclosure Act Annual Reporting



Section 38 of PIDA articulates the annual reporting requirements related to public interest disclosures in the BC Public Service. This report does not contain any information that could lead to the identification of individuals who have made a disclosure or participated in a PIDA investigation. No personal information is disclosed as part of any public reports issued about PIDA.

Agency Designated Officer Responsibilities

Under PIDA, the BCPS introduced a centralized model for managing and investigating disclosures. This model ensures that there is a consistent process in place for employees to report serious wrongdoing. The investigations into disclosures of wrongdoing are led by the agency designated officer, a new role created with the implementation of PIDA. The Assistant Deputy Minister of Employee Relations at the BCPSA has been designated as the agency designated officer for the BCPS. The designated officer for political staff (as defined in the Standards of Conduct for Political Staff) is the Chief of Staff, Office of the Premier.

The agency designated officer has received numerous inquiries since the implementation of PIDA on December 1, 2019. These inquiries have ranged from general requests for more information about PIDA and how it works to specific inquiries about how to make a disclosure. Further work will be undertaken in the upcoming year to increase awareness about PIDA and share information across the BCPS.

PIDA Disclosures

The following sections provides details related to the disclosures received by the agency designated officer from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022.

Table 2: Number of Disclosures Received April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022

Ministry	Disclosures Received	Ministry	Disclosures Received
Advanced Education, Skills & Training	0	Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation	0
Agriculture, Food & Fisheries	0	Intergovernmental Affairs	0
Attorney General	0	Jobs, Economic Recovery & Innovation	0
Children & Family Development	1	Labour	0
Citizens Services	0	Mental Health & Addictions	0
Education	0	Municipal Affairs	0
Energy, Mines & Low Carbon Innovation	0	Office of the Premier	0
Environment & Climate Change Strategy	0	Public Safety & Solicitor General ³	0
Finance ⁴	1	Social Development & Poverty Reduction	1
Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development	0	Tourism, Arts, Culture & Sport	0
Health	0	Transportation & Infrastructure	0
		TOTAL	3

³ The data for the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General includes disclosures from Emergency Management BC that reports through the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General

⁴ The data for the Ministry of Finance includes disclosures from the following organizations that report through the Minister of Finance: BC Public Service Agency, Crown Agencies Secretariat, Government Communications and Public Engagement, Liquor Distribution Branch and Public Sector Employees' Council.

Disclosures from 2020 to 2021

For the period of April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, nine disclosures were considered in scope under PIDA. The following table (Table 3) depicts the status or outcome of these disclosures.

Table 3: Summary of Disclosures April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021

Disclosures Received	Initial Assessment Completed	Investigations Initiated	Investigations Concluded
9	9	2	0

Disclosures from 2021 to 2022

For the period of April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, 3 disclosures were received by the agency designated officer. Table 4 reveals the status of the disclosures made in the past fiscal year.

Table 4: Summary of Disclosures April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022

Disclosures Received	Initial Assessment Completed	Investigations Initiated	Investigations Concluded
3	2	1	0

The designated officer for political staff received no disclosures from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022.

Emerging Themes and Future Activities

In the 2020/2021 PIDA reporting, there were two themes identified: recurring questions related to anonymity and what issues meet the test of serious wrongdoing as defined by PIDA. The same themes have been observed in 2021 / 2022. Further information and resources were developed for employees in 2022 to strengthen employees understanding of protections related to anonymous disclosures and serious wrongdoing. To further address questions related to anonymity and what constitutes serious wrongdoing, resources will be made available to BCPS employees, and the corporate ethics team will continue to develop and offer communication, outreach, and training.

BC Ombudsperson PIDA Recommendations and Findings



As per section 38 of PIDA, there is a legislated requirement that ministries or designated officers annually report on the number of disclosures made to the BC Ombudsperson if the ministry or designated officer has been made aware of the disclosures or any Ombudsperson led investigations under PIDA. This report must include a description of any wrongdoings that are found, recommendations made by the Ombudsperson, and any corrective actions taken to address the wrongdoing or recommendations.

From December 1, 2019 to March 31, 2021, the BC Ombudsperson notified the agency designated officer that they had initiated nine investigations under PIDA. During this period, the BC Ombudsperson discontinued two investigations and concluded one investigation which did not result in a finding of wrongdoing. In the course of one investigation, the BC Ombudsperson identified the need to update a policy and made a recommendation to the ministry to do so. The investigations that were not completed by March 31, 2021 were carried over into the next reporting period.

During the period of April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, the BC Ombudsperson initiated six new investigations under PIDA into allegations pertaining to government ministries. Also during this period, the BC Ombudsperson discontinued three investigations, and three investigations were concluded with no finding of wrongdoing. At the conclusion of two of these investigations, where wrongdoing was not found, the BC Ombudsperson made four recommendations directly related to the findings of the investigations.

Ethics in the BCPS: Next Steps



This report provides all BCPS employees with a snapshot of ethics in the workplace. The work is ongoing and continuously evolving and adapting to meet employee needs. The following outlines some of the key work to be undertaken in the next year:

- Continued implementation of the identification and assessment of ethics risk across ministries
- New ministry ethics snapshots in 2022 following the release of the 2022 WES results
- Development of new ethics-related online resources for BCPS employees
- Development and delivery of new ethics and PIDA communications, outreach and training

It is also important to note that this report focuses predominantly on the prevention of misconduct and inappropriate behaviour. Future reports will expand over time on the policies and processes in place across the BCPS that help to monitor and respond to ethical issues, and build a strong, ethical culture across the organization.



Appendix A: Ethics and PIDA Resources and Links

Key references and resources related to ethics and PIDA in the BCPS.

Legislation

[Public Interest Disclosure Act](#)

Ethics Information and Advisory Service

[Oath of Employment Regulation](#)

[Ethics and Standards of Conduct](#)

[Talking to Your Employees About Ethics & the Standards of Conduct](#)

[Who to Talk to About BC Public Service Employee Ethics](#)

[Ethics & Standards of Conduct for Political Staff](#)

[Standards of Conduct for BC Public Service Employees](#)

[Standards of Conduct for Political Staff](#)

[Corporate Values](#)

[Where Ideas Work 2020 Corporate Plan](#)

[Conflict of Interest](#)

[Social Media Guidelines](#)

[Addressing a Respectful Workplace Issue](#)

[Policies, Procedures and Guidelines](#)

PIDA Information and Resources

[Making a Public Interest Disclosure](#)

[HR Policy 24 - Public Interest Disclosure](#)

[PIDA FAQs for Employees and Supervisors](#)

[PIDA Procedures for BC Government Ministries](#)

[PIDA Procedures for Political Staff](#)

[Public Interest Disclosure Act Guidance for Ministry Supervisors](#)

[Office of the Ombudsperson | Public Interest Disclosure - Office of the Ombudsperson](#)

Independent Office Reports

[An Audit of BC Public Service Ethics Management](#)

[Misfire The 2012 Ministry of Health Employment Terminations and Related Matters](#)