

Applicant Pack

Chief Specialist in Nutrition

Permanent

About Safefood

Safefood is a North-South body, responsible for the promotion of food safety and healthy eating on the island of Ireland. It was established in 1999 under the terms of the British-Irish Agreement Act 1999 and the North-South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) Northern Ireland Order 1999.

The governing legislation confers the following specific functions on the organisation:

- Promotion of food safety
- Research into food safety
- Surveillance of foodborne disease
- Promotion of scientific co-operation and laboratory linkages

In addition to these specific functions, Safefood has a general remit to act as an independent source of scientific advice.

What we do

Safefood works in four key areas: food safety, research, nutrition and healthy eating, and communications.

Food Safety

To ensure the ongoing protection of public health, Safefood is tasked with the promotion of awareness and knowledge of food safety issues and concerns among the public, professionals with an interest in, or responsibility for, food safety, and the food industry. To that end, Safefood arranges public awareness campaigns, conferences, training and strategic support and guidance. As responsibility for the provision of safe food is shared among producers, processors, distributors at all

levels, caterers and the general public, the agency works with many different partners and collaborators across the island of Ireland.

Research

Food safety policies are underpinned by comprehensive access to current, accurate, high-quality scientific information. In order to address gaps in scientific knowledge related to food safety and to facilitate timely decision-making on emerging issues, safefood aims to undertake appropriate research and knowledge gathering.

Our research office is supported by Safefood's Advisory Committee, which brings together experts and representatives with a broad range of professional expertise, experience and backgrounds who can provide strategic and technical advice and guidance. The research office aims to commission research and is responsible for the subsequent monitoring and dissemination of research information.

Nutrition and Healthy Eating

Safefood has a legislative role in 'providing food safety advice and guidance, including advice on nutritional aspects of various foods. It requires safefood to participate actively in the field of nutrition. Nutrition related issues, in particular, obesity is among the key public health threats facing all developed countries. This is a considerable challenge facing society across the island of Ireland and a multi-sectoral, interdisciplinary approach is required. Given safefood's all-island remit, it is uniquely placed to make a valuable contribution in tackling obesity and other nutrition related issues on an all-island basis. Over the past years safefood has developed key partnerships and collaborations with nutrition stakeholders on the island of Ireland. Safefood will continue to adopt a complementary and collaborative approach in the area.

Communications

The Communications Directorate is responsible for promoting the organisation's key messages of food hygiene, food safety and nutrition through the development of targeted public awareness and educational campaigns. The aim of these campaigns is to raise awareness of important public health issues and to encourage changes in

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consumer behaviour. Safefood's messages are based upon solid scientific data and consumer research to assess the needs of the population on the island of Ireland. These messages are delivered through traditional and new media outlets such as social media, consumer and stakeholder events, sponsorship, advertising, direct marketing, public relations and communication with industry and stakeholders. Safefood places people at the centre of its communications activities when communicating messages of food safety, food hygiene and nutrition on the island of Ireland. We regularly carry out research to determine issues that are of importance to our target audience. These research findings inform our campaigns and are communicated with the public. Through our public awareness and educational campaigns, we aim to educate people about the importance of hand washing, the correct storage, preparation and cooking of food, our rights in relation to food hygiene and safety, food supply chains and the importance of healthy eating.

The Role

Job Title: Chief Specialist in Nutrition

Grade: Senior Technical Executive

Post Type: Permanent Full-Time

Location: Cork

Directorate: Nutrition

Remuneration: €69,305 – €87,062 per annum

Reporting to: Director of Nutrition

The Annual Leave allowance for this role is 29 days per annum (30 days after 5 years), plus 10 Public / Bank Holidays.

The Job Holder will combine working in Safefood's office in Eastgate, Little Island, Cork with working remotely (at home). Occasional travel within Ireland including spending time in the Dublin office may be required to fulfil the requirements of the role.

Normal working hours are 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday. We offer Flexible and Blended (Hybrid) Working.

Career Development

At Safefood we believe in investing in our people, encouraging them to achieve a work-life balance while providing support for personal and professional development.

- We offer a wide range of learning and development opportunities to support you throughout your career.
- We provide study and financial support to encourage lifelong learning, as well as assisting you with the costs of professional membership fees.

Work Life Balance

In line with comparable Irish Civil Service Terms and Conditions, Safefood offers staff several leave options which support our people through various stages of their life.

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We have also developed a range of flexible working practices to make it easier for our employees to have a balance between the demands of work and their personal life.

These include:

- Competitive annual leave and public holidays.
- Blended (Hybrid) Working.
- Flexible Working including Flexitime.
- Career breaks.

Additional Financial Benefits

- Attractive pension scheme where you will pay a rate of between 4.6% and 7.35% depending on your salary.
- Full Payment top up for maternity / paternity / adoptive leave (subject to terms and conditions).
- Overtime rates are available to employees who work beyond their normal working hours according to their terms and conditions.

Employee Wellbeing

- Free, confidential counselling and support to employees 24/7 through our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- VDU Eye Examinations and a contribution towards frames if recommended
- Flu vaccinations
- Bike to Work Scheme

Job description

Job Title: Chief Specialist in Nutrition

Scale: Senior Technical Executive, €69,305 – €87,062 per annum

Reports to: Director of Nutrition

Staffing Responsibilities: 1 Research Fellow and 1 Student placement

Location: Cork; however as Safefood is an all-island body there will be a requirement to travel from time to time.

Job purpose

This role assists Safefood's Director of Nutrition in carrying out our nutrition functions. These currently include contributing to policy development and implementation, research, community nutrition, professional networks and communications. Activities will include engaging with multidisciplinary stakeholders on an all-island basis, identifying research needs, providing nutrition guidance to initiatives and campaigns, translating scientific information into best practice for enabling and promoting healthy eating, independent assessment and evaluation of initiatives, developing and maintaining professional networks, working in collaboration with external agencies and acting as a media spokesperson on nutrition for Safefood. The role is one that requires flexibility and the ability to distil and communicate complex public health nutrition issues such as food poverty and obesity.

Duties and responsibilities

1. Manage, review and interpret the evidence base on key public health nutrition issues.
2. Manage Safefood funded projects and networks in Safefood's key public health nutrition areas.
3. Provide technical expertise to the management of Safefood funded research projects, oversee the production of reports and the development of key messages for communication where appropriate.

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4. Support the management of Safefood's professional all-island networks and related conferences.
5. Support all Safefood's communications in the area of nutrition and ensure that they are underpinned by a robust evidence base.
6. Act as a media spokesperson for Safefood.
7. Provide nutritional expertise and support to Safefood in internal and external advisory groups.
8. Build effective relationships and participate in structures and working groups with government Depts and agencies to support development and implementation of nutrition policies.
9. Assist in the oversight and running of Safefood's Community Programmes
10. Represent Safefood at relevant workshops, seminars and conferences.
11. Manage people, data and resources.

This list is not an exhaustive list and you may be required to take on other tasks and duties for the proper and effective performance of your role. Your role will change as the needs of the business change and you will be required to adapt to these changes and to develop your role going forward.

Person specification

Essential criteria – education / qualifications and experience

- Postgraduate Degree in Nutritional Sciences, Human Nutrition or related area.
- At least five years' experience in public health nutrition, project management, research, report writing, collating, evaluating and communicating information.
- Dietitians must be eligible for registration with the Registration Board at CORU.
- Nutritionists must be eligible for registration with Association for Registered Nutritionists (AFN).

Essential criteria - required competencies

Team Leadership

- Works with the team to facilitate high performance, developing clear and realistic objectives and addressing and performance issues if they arise
- Provides clear information and advice as to what is required of the team
- Strives to develop and implement new ways of working effectively to meet objectives
- Leads the team by example, coaching and supporting individuals as required
- Places high importance on staff development, training and maximising skills & capacity of team.
- Is flexible and willing to adapt, positively contributing to the implementation of change

Judgement, analysis and decision making

- Gathers and analyses information from relevant sources, whether financial, numerical or otherwise weighing up a range of critical factors
- Takes account of any broader issues, agendas, sensitivities and related implications when making decisions. Uses previous knowledge and experience in order to guide decisions
- Uses judgement to make sound decisions with a well-reasoned rationale and stands by these
- Puts forward solutions to address problems

Management and delivery of results

- Takes responsibility and is accountable for the delivery of agreed objectives

- Successfully manages a range of different projects and work activities at the same time
- Structures and organises their own and others work effectively
- Is logical and pragmatic in approach, delivering the best possible results with the resources available
- Delegates work effectively, providing clear information and evidence as to what is required
- Proactively identifies areas for improvement and develops practical suggestions for their implementation
- Demonstrates enthusiasm for new developments/changing work practices and strives to implement these changes effectively
- Applies appropriate systems/ processes to enable quality checking of all activities and outputs
- Practices and promotes a strong focus on delivering high quality customer service, for internal and external customers

Interpersonal and communication skills

- Builds and maintains contact with colleagues and other stakeholders to assist in performing role
- Acts as an effective link between staff and senior management
- Encourages open and constructive discussions around work issues Projects conviction, gaining buy-in by outlining relevant information and selling the benefits
- Treats others with diplomacy, tact, courtesy and respect, even in challenging circumstances

- Presents information clearly, concisely and confidently when speaking and in writing
- Collaborates and supports colleagues to achieve organisational goals

Specialist knowledge, expertise and self development

- Has a clear understanding of the roles, objectives and targets of self and team and how they fit into the work of the unit and Department/ Organisation and effectively communicates this to others
- Has high levels of expertise and broad Public Sector knowledge relevant to his/her area of work
- Focuses on self-development, striving to improve performance

Drive and commitment to public service values

- Strives to perform at a high level, investing significant energy to achieve agreed objectives
- Demonstrates resilience in the face of challenging circumstances and high demands
- Is personally trustworthy and can be relied upon
 - Ensures that customers are at the heart of all services provided
- Upholds high standards of honesty, ethics and integrity

Desirable criteria – education / qualifications and experience

- Experience as media spokesperson on topic of nutrition.
- Experience in health promotion
- A PhD in a relevant discipline.
- Experience of working on national and/or international focused projects with multidisciplinary groups

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Additional Information

Safefood is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion throughout its work. Safefood is required to comply with Equality and Human Rights legislation in both Ireland and Northern Ireland with equality objectives and commitments mainstreamed into its main strategic and operational business plans. It is fully committed to fulfilling these obligations through a proactive approach to equality and human rights issues in all aspects of its work and by providing a working environment that is free from unlawful discrimination, victimisation or harassment.

Safefood's Disability Action Plan 2021–2025 outlines measures to ensure that equality of opportunity is achieved, with regular monitoring and reporting on progress towards delivering on these commitments submitted to the Equality Commission (NI).

Regular training in equality, diversity and inclusion is provided to all staff to encourage awareness of disability and equality issues and safefood actively encourages people with disabilities to apply for roles in the organisation.

Safefood is committed to meeting our environmental and sustainability obligations to combat climate change by driving down our energy and carbon impacts. We have implemented several initiatives across our offices as part of our Climate Action Plan to recycle, reduce waste, and minimise paper usage. Additionally, by embracing hybrid working arrangements and technology, we have reduced the environmental footprint of our office spaces and lessened the need for many of our employees to commute and travel. We will continue to explore other opportunities that will support our efforts to meet our future commitments to combat climate change.

The recruitment and selection process

How to apply

You must e-mail your CV and a Cover Letter to recruit@safefood.net. A Personal Details Form, also available on our site, must also be submitted.

Applications will not be considered if all three documents are not submitted.

In their **Cover Letter**, Candidates should endeavour to address how they meet both the essential experience and the competencies outlined in the Person Specification. This should be a maximum of one A4 page and must be typed.

In their **CV**, candidates should give relevant education details / qualifications and career history and should be no longer than two pages.

Candidates should endeavour to also complete the **Personal Details Form** in full.

All applications must be received by **12 noon on 13 February 2026**. Applications received after this date and time will not be accepted.

For more information regarding the Recruitment & Selection procedure at Safefood please also read the Candidate Briefing Notes.

Timetable

The anticipated timetable is as follows:

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Advertisement: | 12 th January 2026 |
| Closing date for applications: | 12 th February 2026 |
| Shortlisting: | Week commencing 16 th February 2026 |
| Interviews: | Week Commencing 23rd February 2026. |

Please note that these time frames are indicative and are provided to support all candidates in their preparation / planning for this recruitment assignment.

Reserve List

Safefood operates a reserve list which will be used to cover vacancies that may arise for this or similar roles within the following 12 months.

Further Information

Applications on a secondment basis will be considered provided you have prior agreement from your current organisation / line manager.

Further information about Safefood can be gained by visiting our website: www.safefood.net

Should you have any further queries about the recruitment and selection process please call Human Resources on +353 (0) 86 601 6002 or email recruit@safefood.net.

Key terms and conditions of appointment

Salary Scale

The current salary scale ranges from €69,305 – €87,062 per annum.

Please note that the salary quoted is a salary scale. **Entry will be at the minimum of the scale and the rate of remuneration will not be subject to negotiation and may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy.** Subject to satisfactory performance, increments may be payable in line with current Government Policy.

Different terms and conditions may apply if, immediately prior to appointment, the successful candidate is a serving civil or public servant.

Hours of Work

Normal working hours are 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday. The working week is 35 hours. However, on occasions, staff will be requested to work additional hours as the needs of the business dictate.

Holiday Entitlement

Current holiday entitlement is 29 days' annual leave increasing to 30 days' annual leave upon 5 years' service. Safefood also recognises 10 public holidays.

Pension

Safefood participates in the North South Pension Scheme. Current employee contribution rates are 5.45% for this grade of post.