

Applicant Pack

Director of Communications

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 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: Director of Communications

Grade: Principal Officer

Post Type: Permanent Full-Time

Location: Dublin

Directorate: Communications

Remuneration: €100,720 - €124,582 per annum

Reporting to: Chief Executive

The Annual Leave allowance for this role is 30 days per annum, plus 10 Public / Bank Holidays.

The Job Holder will combine working in Safefood's office in Abbey Street, Dublin 1 with working remotely (at home). Occasional travel within Ireland including spending time in the Cork office headquarters will 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. 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.
- 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	Director of Communications
Scale	Principal Officer €100,720 – €124,582 NPPC
Reports to	Chief Executive
Staffing Responsibilities	Communications Manager Communications Manager Digital and Health Communications Executive Executive Assistant
Location	Dublin; however, as Safefood has its headquarters in Cork and due to the nature of this position, there will be a requirement to travel in the island of Ireland.

Job Purpose

The Director of Communications provides strategic leadership to protect and strengthen Safefood's profile and reputation, ensuring all communications build trust and confidence among stakeholders and the public across the island of Ireland. They will lead the Communications function of Safefood creating and managing communications programs, campaigns and content ensuring Safefood's messages are clear, consistent and impactful.

As a member of the Senior Management Team, they will provide advice and guidance to the Chief Executive and have lead responsibility in the strategic development of Safefood's policies in these key areas. As Safefood's strategy is underpinned by a partnership approach, the Director will work closely with the other Directors to ensure that Safefood maintains and develops its reputation as a credible, trustworthy and reliable source for information on food safety and healthy eating.

The Director will ensure that communication strategies contribute to maintaining Safefood's effectiveness in a competitive environment. The Director will take lead responsibility in developing multi-channel communication campaigns and critically enhancing our digital presence as a trusted source of information. They will also build appropriate partnerships and collaborations with professional counterparts in the public and private sectors in both jurisdictions and at international level.

Key Responsibilities

- Formulation and implementation of strategies and associated operational plans.
- Leadership and management of communications activities and the team.
- Provision of key marketing and communications information to Safefood and its Advisory Board and Committees, and external legislative committees as required.
- Reputation management and brand stewardship
- Financial Management and Reporting.
- Managing external agencies, partnerships and developing relationships with key external stakeholders.
- Oversight of Dublin office facility in conjunction with the facilities team to ensure services support the business needs

More specifically, this will entail:

Strategy formulation and implementation

1. Advising on and developing proposals on strategies and plans to meet Safefood's communication and promotion objectives in relation to food safety and healthy eating.
2. Interpreting, developing and implementing policies and procedures as required to meet Safefood's objectives.
3. Leading the development and guardianship of Safefood's brand to support reputation, credibility and public trust across all channels and audiences.
4. Working in partnership with the Directors of Nutrition and Food Safety, to develop and deliver appropriate programmes and communications to meet Safefood's objectives in relation to promoting food safety and healthy eating.
5. Providing and facilitating specialist communications advice on relevant matters to the CEO, Chairperson, Committees and other Directorates.
6. Keeping up to date on proposed and current Irish and UK legislation and international developments affecting Safefood's role.
7. Monitoring the media landscape, scanning the media environment and developing an effective understanding of current and possible future strategies.

Reporting and Budgeting

1. Planning and managing the Directorate's budget ensuring that all procurement has a value for money focus, with robust forecasting and management of expenditure.

2. Submitting reports as required to the Advisory Board, the Advisory Committee, sub-Committees, sponsor departments, the North South Ministerial Council and the Chief Executive.
3. Attending and contributing to meetings of Safefood's Advisory Board and Advisory Committee as required.
4. Submitting reports as required and maintaining appropriate records of meetings and activities.
5. Advising, preparing and implementing business plans and budgets for Directorate activities.
6. Assessing value for money and effectiveness of individual campaigns.

Managing Staff and Partnerships

1. Leading and motivating staff to deliver high quality work. Actively contributing to the development of effective and productive workplace relationships and leading by example in terms of strategic perspectives, commitment, flexibility and a strong emphasis on positioning Safefood as authoritative, accessible and supportive.
2. Managing the procurement of and overseeing the contracts and management of all external communication agencies, including advertising, public relations, market research, digital, publications design, fulfilment, and media monitoring.
3. Liaising as necessary with relevant external parties in the island of Ireland and abroad including government departments and agencies, regulatory bodies, professional bodies and institutes.
4. Representing the organisation in key fora within the island of Ireland and further afield.
5. Leading cross-directorate teams as required to implement Safefood strategies.

Communications development and activities

1. Increasing awareness of Safefood and its role in relation food safety and healthy eating across the island by leading the development of all communication activities.
2. Strengthening Safefood's ability to respond rapidly to counter misinformation and grow our recognition as an accessible, trusted source.
3. Overseeing the development, delivery and evaluation of advertising and public information campaigns, ensuring they are insight-led, audience-focused and aligned with organisational objectives and statutory responsibilities.

4. Advising and approving on campaign objectives, channel mix, budgets and schedules ensuring value for money and compliance with governance requirements.
5. Overseeing the strategic direction for Safefood's digital communications. Approving channel development, content approaches and media spend.
6. Overseeing the development and implementation of education programmes, events and publications for Safefood's multiple audiences.
7. Liaising with appropriate external bodies including educational bodies, government departments, agencies involved in food safety and nutrition and international bodies.
8. Being a spokesperson, as appropriate, for Safefood.
9. Managing the publication of scientific research and opinion for Safefood.
10. Leading out on crisis communication ensuring rapid, accurate response during emergencies or high profile issues.
11. Applying social marketing and behavioural approaches and models in the development of programmes and campaigns.

Market Research and evaluation

1. Directing market research strategies to meet Safefood's communication objectives.
2. Overseeing audience insights, performance data and media metrics to optimise campaigns in-flight and demonstrate impact and effectiveness and to inform decision-making for future work.
3. Supporting the scientific research process by identifying issues of public health concern.
4. Reviewing activities of other food safety bodies/organisations and to bring to the attention of the directors any salient matters.

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.

Safefood is committed to equality of opportunity.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria - Education/Qualifications & Experience

- Third level degree in a health promotion, business, marketing or communications discipline.
- At least 5 years senior management experience within one or more of the following disciplines: Social Marketing, Market Research, Advertising and Promotions, Public Relations, Media Relations, Health Promotion within the public, private, voluntary or community sectors.
- Experience demonstrating sound judgement, strong leadership qualities, people management, interpersonal skills and an ability to motivate staff.
- Previous experience of business planning to include financial budgeting and forecasting.
- Demonstrable experience in the management of communication campaigns

Essential Criteria - Required Competencies

Leadership & Strategic Direction

- Leads the team, setting high standards, tackling any performance problems & facilitating high performance.
- Contributes to the shaping of directorate and organisational strategy and policy.
- Develops a culture of learning & development, offering coaching and constructive/supportive feedback.
- Actively collaborates with other Organisations and Agencies.

Judgement & Decision Making

- Identifies and focuses on core issues when dealing with complex information/situations.
- Assembles facts, manipulates verbal and numerical information, thinks through issues logically.
- Sees the relationships between issues and quickly grasp the high level and socio-political implications.
- Makes sound and well informed decisions, understanding their impact and implications.

Management & Delivery of Results

- Initiates and takes personal responsibility for delivering results/services in own area.
- Balances strategy and operational detail to meet business needs.

- Makes optimum use of resources and implements performance measures to deliver on objectives.
- Critically reviews projects and activities to ensure their effectiveness and that they meet organisational requirements and provide value for money.
- Ensures team are focused and act on Business Plan priorities, even when faced with pressure.

Building Relationships & Communication

- Speaks and writes in a clear, articulate and impactful manner Actively listens, seeking to understand the perspective and position of others.
- Manages and resolves conflicts / disagreements in a positive & constructive manner.
- Proactively engages with colleagues at all levels of the organisation and across other Departments/ Organisations and builds strong professional networks.

Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development

- Keeps up to date with key departmental, sectoral, national and international policies and economic, political and social trends that affect the role.
- Maintains a strong focus on self-development, seeking feedback and opportunities for growth.

Drive & Commitment to Public Service Values

- Demonstrates personal commitment to the role, maintaining determination and persistence while maintain maintains a sense of balance and perspective in relation to work issues.
- Is personally trustworthy, honest and respectful, delivering on promises and commitments.
- Promotes a culture that fosters the highest standards of ethics and integrity.

Desirable Criteria - Education/Qualifications & Experience

- Professional or postgraduate qualification in marketing or communications
- Previous experience of health promotion communications.
- Previous experience of cross jurisdictional working

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 Friday 13th 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:

Advertisement:	12 th January 2026
Closing date for applications:	13 th February 2026
Shortlisting:	Week commencing 16 th February 2026
Interviews:	Week Commencing 2 nd March 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 €100,720 – €124,582 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 30 days' annual leave. Safefood also recognises 10 public holidays.

Pension

Safefood participates in the North South Pension Scheme.