

Disability Action Plan

2026 - 2030



A copy of this Disability Action Plan will be made available on our website
www.safefood.net

Safefood can provide information and documents in a range of alternative formats on request. This includes but is not limited to: Irish, Ulster Scots, minority languages, Braille, large print, or audio.

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Disability Action Plan 2026-2030

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Foreword

This Disability Action Plan (the Plan) is a statement of Safefood's commitment to fulfil its statutory obligations under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006). The Act places duties on public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have regard to the need to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life ('the disability duties').

This Plan sets out how Safefood will meet these duties through a range of action measures. It also outlines Safefood's commitment to the promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people including enhanced engagement with, and the involvement of, disabled people in the work of the Body.

I, as the Chief Executive, along with the Director Corporate Operations, will allocate all necessary resources (in terms of time, people and money) in order to effectively implement this Plan and, where appropriate, build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual business plans.

We will also put appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure that the disability duties are complied with, and this disability action plan is effectively implemented. We will ensure the effective communication of the plan to staff and to providing all necessary training and guidance for staff on the disability duties and the implementation of the plan.

We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of this plan, as well as carrying out a five yearly review of it.



Dr Uí Chruálaoich
Chief Executive

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1 Introduction

Legislation in Northern Ireland requires Safefood under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006, when carrying out its functions:

- to have due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life ('the disability duties').

Section 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, requires Safefood to submit to the Equality Commission a Disability Action Plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions

Role and functions of Safefood - what we do

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 establishing legislation provides for:

- the promotion of food safety. research into food safety.
- the promotion of scientific cooperation and linkages between laboratories. surveillance of food-borne diseases.
- the development of cost-effective facilities for specialised laboratory testing.

There is also a requirement to provide advice of the nutritional aspects of various foods.

Safefood's role is to promote food safety and provide nutritional advice on the island of Ireland in accordance with its legislative remit. This is achieved by building an evidence base of sound and authoritative science that is used to influence policy and to promote behaviour change in the overall interests of improved public health. Safefood has made

it a priority to work in partnership with key stakeholders on the island of Ireland and to utilise innovative approaches to support it in:

- communicating clearly, in a direct and supportive manner,
- promoting a better understanding of food safety, nutrition, and healthy eating, and,
- encouraging healthier, safer, and sustainable food choices by consumers and those involved in the food chain.

Safefood was given responsibility to promote food safety and healthy eating across the island of Ireland. People and the food environment on the island of Ireland are at the centre of both the vision and mission of Safefood. It strives to create messages and develop initiatives that are rooted in the everyday lives of its target audiences and communicate with people in the context of what matters to them regarding food and health. This means we want to encourage consumers and people involved in the food industry on the island of Ireland to help people to have better nutrition and healthier lifestyles. We do things like:

- Give people advice on how to prepare, cook and store food safely.
- Look at different types of food and find out if they are healthy foods.
- Work with schools to provide educational programmes on food safety and eating healthily.
- Give people advice on nutrition and portions sizes of food.
- Work closely with other organisations to promote understanding and awareness about healthy eating and food safety.
- Run campaigns on food safety and healthy eating.
- Support and pay for research.
- We employ people.
- We make sure that we obey the laws about our work, our employment, our services, equality and people's rights.

How we developed this plan

We first looked at what we had already done. We then looked to see what the Equality Commission said would be good. We also looked at what other organisations have done. This helped us think about all of the things we are able to do.

We thought it would be a good thing to involve people who have a disability to develop our plan. Therefore, we asked people to help us and tell us if what we have suggested are good ideas.

In developing the Disability Action Plan, Safefood sought to carry out consultation in a meaningful manner and invited representative equality organisations and stakeholders to comment and provide feedback on the draft Disability Action Plan. A public consultation on the draft Disability Action Plan 2026-2030 was undertaken from 11 November 2025 to 23 January 2026.

This consultation on the draft Disability Action Plan helped Safefood:

- identify opportunities in which Safefood can promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- identify general barriers faced by disabled people participating in public life;
- shape and inform the action measures contained within the Plan.

2 What we have done up to now

Previous measures

The following measures reflect the many positive actions Safefood has taken in delivering previous Disability Action Plans. We have listed below some of the things we do to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life:

- We encourage everyone to apply for our jobs by stating that we promote equality of opportunity.
- Safefood's recruitment & selection procedures have been reviewed to ensure fair participation from job applicants with disabilities. A new recruitment & selection training seminar was developed and rolled out to panel members.
- We always ask people to let us know if they have different requirements for interview and for attending events that we host.
- We promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- Our staff get regular training in equality issues, for example, through attending workshops, completing online learning courses and our Employee Assistance Programme.
- Our offices in Cork and Dublin provide a suitable environment for disabled staff and visitors.
- All of our corporate publications list the many ways of contacting us including voice calls, email and textphone.
- We let people know they can receive materials in alternative formats if they request this from us.
- When hosting internal or external events, we have ensured that presentation and promotional material are easily readable; signage is clear; handouts are in accessible formats; venues are easy to reach and are accessible.

- We have worked with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB (NI)) and National Council for the Blind in Ireland (NCBI) to produce audio materials on topics such as food safety and superfoods. We also worked with them to make 101 Square Meals booklets available on the NCBI Bookshare making reading easier for people with dyslexia, blindness, cerebral palsy and other reading difficulties.
- Safefood was awarded the Golisano Health leadership Award by Special Olympics Ireland for its contribution to improving health education opportunities available for children with intellectual difficulties through the Health@Play programme.
- We monitor the Disability Federation Ireland and Disability Action NI websites to identify appropriate awareness days and promote staff participation.
- An awareness session was delivered to all staff on the work of the Communications Directorate on accessibility guidelines and new accessibility processes adopted by Safefood.
- Before we launched our new website, we undertook an audit in line with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Checklist and ensured compliance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. We also consulted the National Disability Authority Communications Toolkit for the Public Service, and we made changes to the website to make it more accessible. The new website makes it easier for people with a wider range of disabilities to access the information that they need.
- We have policies and procedures in place to assist staff who may declare a disability and those policies are reviewed regularly. We seek to include people with disabilities in the pictures and photographs that we use so that our publications are more inclusive and promote a positive image of living with disability.
- We try to ensure that our focus groups are representative of the whole of society, and we listen to people at these focus groups.

- We implemented a tool for people called 'Closed Caption' for all of our television advertising.
- We also use 'Closed Caption' in videos we produce.
- Safefood facilitated the charity Angel Eyes NI by providing an opportunity for them to highlight their resources to small food businesses in Northern Ireland at food safety workshops for small food businesses that Safefood run in partnership with the District and Borough Councils of Northern Ireland. Angel Eyes NI aims to empower young people in Northern Ireland with vision impairment through education, support, and inclusive opportunities. These include advocacy for the implementation of a QR code to improve accessibility and independence for these young people (and by extension all visually impaired people) in hospitality and tourism venues.
- We facilitated an awareness session to staff delivered by Guide Dogs NI.
- HR staff attended an online 'Dyslexia in the Workplace' seminar.

3 What we are going to do

Effective implementation of the plan

We are committed to developing a disability action plan which we will send to the Equality Commission. This plan will show what we will do when promoting safe and healthy eating to try to make things better for people with disabilities.

We want to make sure that we do this in a way that does make a difference to people with disabilities. In recognition of the important and specific groups within our community, we will set aside people, time and money to make these plans work. Safefood has another plan for our business that we do every year called a 'business plan'. This plan covers all our work each year. Where it is right for us to do so, we will include the actions from this disability action plan into our business plans.

We asked what people thought of our Disability Action Plan. We considered their thoughts and ideas and considered them where possible. We also at the same time circulated this document to those on our consultation list and were committed to updating the plan where necessary based on any feedback we received.

We will now work to implement our Disability Action Plan. However, if you have any more thoughts or ideas, please do contact the HR and Administrative Executive who is our Disability Officer.

We may also be able to arrange a face-to-face meeting either in person or remotely if this is more appropriate.

We will send this plan to the Equality Commission, put it on our website and explain it to all our staff. We will look at different ways to communicate this plan to people.

Who is included in our plan?

Our major aim for the island of Ireland is to promote food safety and healthy eating. These concern many people. We have found it does not matter if people have disabilities or not – being an unhealthy weight affects peoples' health. Preparing, storing and consuming food in a safe way also concerns most people whether they have disabilities or not. Sometimes though being overweight and/or accessing food safety information can be more of a problem for some groups.

There are other equality laws that require us to promote equality of opportunity across other areas such as age, caring responsibilities, gender and ethnicity. We will always take these categories into account as people can be in more than one category.

There are many groups that can benefit from the promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people. As we are a small organisation, we have chosen these groups in particular as we feel we can contribute in a positive way as part of our role.

Our Disability Action Plan covers the following key disability areas:

- Learning disabilities
- Sensory disabilities
- Communication difficulties
- Mental Health disabilities
- Physical disabilities

We would like to encourage participation of disabled people in public life, and we will do this through our:

- Consumer Focus Review Panels
- S75 Consultation Groups
- Educational and Science Working Groups

Our staff have been involved in developing our disability action plan and have been trained to help them understand what they have to do. We have also made one person responsible for making sure that we are going to do what we have promised to do. This is the Director Corporate Operations, and their contact details are:

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Monitoring and evaluation - how we will review this plan

Safefood is committed to monitoring and reviewing policies and practices to ensure the disability duties are being met. Monitoring the progress of the plan itself is a significant element of this process. Every year we will undertake a review of the Disability Action Plan, assessing progress against the action measures. This will provide a measure of how effectively Safefood is meeting its disability duties. We will write up what we have done. We will send this report to the Equality Commission and put it on our website:

<https://www.safefood.net/disability>

We will review the plan every year to see whether we need to make any changes to it. If there are any big changes, we will communicate with people with a disability to see what they think. After four years, we will look at our plan and see what we have done and what we can do next. We will communicate with people with a disability when we do this.

Public life positions

We want more people with disabilities to engage with us and to get involved in public life. As well as carrying out the actions in our Disability Action Plan, we will:

- Help everyone to have access to our information.

- Provide disabled people with access to the full range of career opportunities within safe food.
- Ensure this information is free and available in the way people need it to understand it.
- If we are asked, we will arrange face-to-face meetings or give talks to people either remotely or in person as appropriate.
- Where it is reasonably possible, provide interpreters and signers for events.
- Promote positive action initiatives where appropriate.

Safefood Disability Action Plan for 2026-2030

Measure	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicators	Responsibility And Timescale
1. Ensure all staff and Advisory Board members receive disability equality legislation and disability awareness training, covering both seen and unseen disabilities	Improved staff and board member knowledge and increased awareness of disability issues	Number of staff and Advisory Board members receiving training Post training evaluation	Director Corporate Operations Annually
2. Ensure all new staff and Advisory Board Members receive disability equality legislation and disability awareness training within 3 months of start date	All new staff and board members have an awareness of disability and an understanding of disability legislations	All new staff and office holders receive training within 3 months of start date	Director Corporate Operations Annually
3. Ensure staff and external members involved in recruitment and selection panels are provided with appropriate training on disability awareness and the disability duties	Members of recruitment and selection panels have an awareness and understanding of current disability issues	Number of recruitment and selection panel members receiving training Post training evaluation	Director Corporate Operations Annually
4. Deliver equality screening training based on priority areas and job / office holder roles	At least 5 staff members / office holders to be trained and available to carry out equality screening.	Ensure suitably qualified staff / office holders are available to provide equality screening	Director Corporate Operations Annually
5. Provide advice and support to staff and Advisory Board members on wellbeing and promote wellbeing initiatives via the Employee Assistance Programme	Emotional health and wellbeing awareness among staff and to assist with wellbeing amongst teams	Wellbeing programme and awareness of wellbeing issues enhanced within Safefood Number of staff and office holders receiving advice / support	Director Corporate Operations Annually

6. Continue to assess and improve accessibility of website and other communication materials	Ensure that the website is accessible for all users	Ensure website continues to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 Checklist (WCAG 2.1) and Public Guidelines. Publish an accessibility statement Safefood is currently working through a number of actions to make it fully compliant following an audit of the site	Director Communications Annually
7. Promote the Disability Action Plan 2026-2030 through internal communication channels such as the intranet and by email	All staff are aware of the planned disability action measures and ensure they are on target	Progress reporting on delivery of the Disability Action Plan is a quarterly agenda item at meetings of the Senior Management Team.	Director Corporate Operations Annually
8. Alternative formats of key documents will be provided upon request to include easy-read, braille, large print and audio	Information on the work of Safefood is communicated to all via a variety of methods	100% of requests received for key documents in alternative formats will be provided within 2-3 weeks	Director Communications Annually
9. Promote a positive image of disabled people	Relevant articles, case studies and images to be included in promotional material where appropriate. We aim to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people by improving our representation of disabled people on our website and in our publications.	Help to promote a positive image of disabled people and make promotional material more inclusive	Director Communications Annually

10. Ensure that all Safefood events meet the needs of disabled people	Ensure that Safefood co-ordinated events are accessible for disabled people	All event locations to have disability access with venue rooms being accessible. Presentations and event literature to be made available in alternative formats upon request such as easy-read, braille, large print and audio. Signage at events to be visible and clear with venues to having suitable parking/public transport access. Consider the use of registered interpreters where appropriate at large-scale events.	Director Communications Annually
11. Ensure that all video / film material produced by Safefood is accessible	Increase accessibility of Safefood produced video / film content	All video / film content produced by Safefood is fully accessible	Director Communications Annually
12. Advertise recruitment vacancies for job roles /Advisory Board positions widely in a variety of media. Provide details of open recruitment competitions to relevant disability agencies	All people, those with and without a disability, will have equal access to information on job/office holder opportunities advertised by Safefood	Monitor the number of applicants who learn of the position through these disability agencies	Director Corporate Operations Annually
13. Ensure all requests for reasonable adjustments as part of the recruitment process are facilitated. Include a statement in job adverts that Safefood will make reasonable adjustments for applicants who have disabilities	Ensure that no applicant will be disadvantages due to disability during any recruitment competition	The number of reasonable adjustments requested that are facilitated	Director Corporate Operations Annually

<p>14. Provide ongoing advice and support to staff in relation to reasonable work adjustment requirements</p>	<p>Meet, where appropriate, reasonable work adjustments to allow staff with disabilities to fully participate in employment.</p>	<p>Record the number of reasonable work adjustment requests made by staff and any adjustments made to meet these requests.</p> <p>Seek ongoing input from employees with disabilities as to their experience of the 'reasonable adjustments' process and respond accordingly</p>	<p>Director Corporate Operations</p> <p>Annually</p>
<p>15. Provide information to staff of national disability awareness days and promote staff participation</p>	<p>Raise awareness and visibility of disability issues amongst all staff and board members</p>	<p>Inclusion of information on awareness days on the internal intranet</p>	<p>Director Corporate Operations</p> <p>Annually</p>



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