

Disability Action Plan

2021 - 2025



Disability Action Plan 2021-2025

Publication date: March 2021

Our Mission

“To contribute to public health and well-being, by promoting food safety and healthy eating on the island of Ireland”



Our Vision

“Consumers on the island of Ireland who are empowered to eat healthy and safe food”



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1 Introduction

safefood's job is to promote safe and healthy eating across the island of Ireland.

Legislation in Northern Ireland requires us to:

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

As part of this law, we are committed to developing a disability action plan, which we send to the Equality Commission. This plan shows what we will do when promoting safe and healthy eating to try to make things better for people with disabilities.

Ray Dolan, our Chief Executive, wants 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.

Our staff have been involved in developing our disability 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 of Corporate Operations their contact details are:

7 East Gate Avenue

East Gate

Little Island

Co Cork

T45 RX01

Email:equality@safefood.net

Textphone: 00 353 086 601 6002

Telephone: 00 353 21 230 4100

How we will review this plan

Every year 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 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.

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 three 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

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. So we asked people to help us and tell us if what we had suggested were good ideas.

What we do

safe food was set up in 1999 under the Belfast-Irish Agreement. We were given responsibility to promote food safety and healthy eating across the island of Ireland. 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 life-styles.

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.

2 What we have done up to now

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.
- 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, Dublin and Belfast 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.
- 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.
- Before we launched our new website, we undertook an audit in line with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Checklist and 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.

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What we are going to do now

We asked what people thought of our Disability Plan. We have looked at their thoughts and ideas and considered them where possible. Due to the current Covid-19 restrictions we were unable to carry out a consultation in a suitable timeframe.

However, following advice from The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland we have proceeded with publication. We will also at the same time circulate this document to those on our consultation list and commit to updating the plan where necessary based on any feedback we receive.

We will now work towards making our Disability Plan happen. If you have any more thoughts or ideas, please do contact Olwyn Murphy who is our Disability Officer. If you need this document in another format or language, please get in touch with us. You can write, telephone or e-mail and the contact details are:

HR and Compliance Executive

7 EastGate Avenue

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Co Cork

T45 RX01

Email: equality@safefood.net

Textphone: 00 353 086 601 6002

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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.

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 Action Plan, we will:

- **Help everyone 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 2021-2025

Action	Intended outcome	Performance indicator	Responsibility and timescale
1. Ensure all staff and Advisory Board members receive disability equality legislation and disability awareness training	Improved staff and board member knowledge and increased awareness of disability issues	Number of staff and Board members receiving training	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 in disability awareness	Members of recruitment panels have an awareness and understanding of disability issues	All members of recruitment and selection panels trained	Director Corporate Operations Annually
4. Provide advice and support to staff and Advisory Board members on wellbeing and promote wellbeing initiatives	Emotional health and wellbeing awareness among staff and to assist with wellbeing amongst teams	Wellbeing programme and awareness of wellbeing issues enhanced within safefood	Director Corporate Operations Annually
5. 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 2.0 Checklist (WCAG 2.0) and Public Guidelines. Publish an accessibility statement	Director Marketing & Communications Annually
6. Promote the Disability Action Plan 2021-2025 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 on delivery of the Disability Action Plan regular agenda item at meetings of the Senior Management Team.	Director Corporate Operations Annually

7. Promote a positive image of disabled people	Relevant articles, Case Studies and/or 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 Marketing and Communications Annually
8. Ensure that all <i>safefood</i> events meet the needs of disabled people	Ensure that <i>safefood</i> co-ordinated events are accessible for disabled people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All event locations have disability access • Presentations and event literature to be made available in alternative formats upon request • Signage at events to be visible and clear • Venues to have suitable parking/public transport access • Consider the use of registered interpreters where appropriate at large-scale events. 	Director Marketing and Communications Annually
9. Provide details of open recruitment competitions to relevant disability agencies and consider all requests for reasonable adjustments as part of the selection process.	Ensure that no applicant will be disadvantages due to disability during any recruitment competition	Reasonable adjustments requested provided	Director Corporate Operations Annually
10. Provide ongoing advice and support to staff in relation to reasonable work adjustment requirements	Meet, where appropriate, reasonable work adjustments to allow disabled staff to fully participate in employment.	Record the number of reasonable work adjustment requests made by staff and any adjustments made to meet these requests.	Director Corporate Operations Annually

11. Provide information to staff of national disability awareness days and promote staff participation.	Raise awareness and visibility of disability issues amongst all staff and board members	Inclusion of information on awareness days on internal intranet	Director Corporate Operations Annually
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safefood

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