

Disability Action Plan 2016 – 2020

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

Publication date: December 2016

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1 Introduction

safefood's job is to promote safe and healthy eating across the island of Ireland. There is a law in Northern Ireland that 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, Patricia Fitzgerald, and her contact details are:

7 East Gate Avenue
East Gate
Little Island
Co Cork
T45 RX01
Email: equality@safefood.eu
Textphone: 00 353 086 601 6002
Telephone: 00 353 21 230 4100

1.1 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:

<http://www.safefood.eu/Utility/About-Us/Policies/Disability.aspx>

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've done and what we can do next. We will communicate with people with a disability when we do this.

1.2 Who is included in our plan

Our major worries for the island of Ireland are food safety and healthy eating, in particular obesity. These concern many people. We have found it doesn't matter if people have disabilities or not – being overweight or obese affects peoples' health. Sometimes though being overweight can be more of a problem for some groups. Our Disability Action Plan covers the following key disability areas:

- Learning disabilities
- Mental Health disabilities
- Physical disabilities

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 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.

We do have an Advisory Board and an Advisory Committee. The members of these are chosen by the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC).

We may have influence over and be able to encourage participation of disabled people in public life through:

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

1.3 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 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. The list of people and organisations who we asked is at Appendix One.

1.4 What we do

safefood 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 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 staff.
- 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.
- We always ask people to let us know if they have different requirements for interview and for attending events that we host.
- Our staff get regular training in equality issues.
- Our offices in Cork, Dublin and Belfast provide a suitable environment for disabled staff and visitors.
- We have a textphone number printed on our corporate publications.
- We let people know they can receive materials in alternative formats on request.
- 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 have updated our website to help people access it with and offer Browsealoud as another tool to assist people.
- We have put policies and procedures in place to assist staff who may declare a disability.
- We review our pictures and photographs to ensure a positive image is made of disabled people.
- We listened to people at our focus groups and implemented a tool for people called 'Closed Caption' for all our television advertising.

3 What we are going to do now

We asked what people thought of our Disability Plan. We've looked at their thoughts and ideas and considered them where possible.

We will now work towards making our Disability Plan happen. If you have any more thoughts or ideas, please do contact Colm McGuinness who is our Disability Officer. You can write, telephone or e-mail and his contact details are:

HR and Corporate Governance Executive

7 EastGate Avenue

EastGate

Little Island

Co Cork

T45 RX01

Email: equality@safefood.eu

Textphone: 00 353 086 601 6002

Telephone: 00 353 21 230 4104

We may also be able to arrange a face to face meeting if this is more appropriate.

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

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

- Help everyone have access to our information.
- 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.
- Where it is reasonably possible, provide interpreters and signers for events.

safefood Disability Action Plan for 2016-2020

| Action | Intended Outcome | Performance Indicator | Responsibility and Timescale |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Continue to assess and improve accessibility of website and other communication materials | Improved accessibility | Website accessibility of recognised standard Check list of materials resources reviewed | Director Marketing and Communications Annually |
| 2. Develop and implement an Accessible Information Policy | Improved accessibility to all safefood communications | Development of policy Protocol for dealing with requests and to ensure compliance with the EU Directive on accessibility of websites and mobile apps. | Director Corporate Operations 2017 |
| 3. Engage with organisations to deliver staff training to raise awareness of specific barriers faced by people with mental health disabilities. | Increased staff and Advisory Board awareness of the range of mental health issues | All staff and board members trained | Directors Corporate Operations and Human Health and Nutrition 2018 |
| 4. Engage with the Irish Wheelchair Association, Action in Hearing Loss (NI), Deafhear (ROI) and National Autistic Society of Northern Ireland and Autism Ireland to explore the feasibility of developing targeted initiatives | Enhanced partnerships and dialogue | Targeted initiatives explored and agreed if possible. | Director Marketing and Communications 2017-2019 |
| 5. Commission food related research in relation to people with learning disability needs | People with a disability gain meaningful experiences | Research paper Participant feedback | Director Food Science 2019 |
| 6. Encourage staff participation in national awareness days | Increased staff awareness | Statistics on participation | Director Corporate Operations 2017-2019 |

Appendix One

Organisations we consulted with:

Department of Health
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Department of Justice
Department of Education
Department for Communities
Department for Infrastructure
Department for the Economy
Centre for Cross Border Studies
Co-operation Ireland
Enterprise Ireland
NI Statistics and Research Agency
NI European Commission Office
NIAO
North/South Ministerial Council
Department of Health
Department of Health (ROI)
Department of Finance
Executive Office
Waterways
UlsterScots Agency
Loughs Agency
Tourism Ireland
Foras Na Gaeilge
SEUPB
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
Ards and North Down Borough Council
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
Belfast City Council
Causeway Coast and Glens District Council
Derry City and Strabane District Council
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

Mid East and Antrim Borough Council
Mid Ulster District Council
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
Conservative Party
Democratic Unionist Party
SDLP
Sinn Fein
Ulster Unionist Party
Workers Party
Advice NI
Arts Council NI
Belfast Regeneration Office
Big Lottery
Bryson House
CFNI
Committee on the Administration of Justice
Commission for Victims and Survivors NI
Community Development & Health Network
Community Relations Council (NI)
Community Work Ireland
Confederation of Community Groups
Co-operation Ireland
Council for Nature Conservation and Countryside
CRUSE Bereavement NI
Early Years
Education Authority
Employers' Forum on Disability
Equality Coalition
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
Extern Organisation
Family Planning Association
Focus on Family
Heritage Lottery Fund
International Fund for Ireland
Joint Business Council
National Trust
NICVA
NIEA
NILGA
Northern Health & Social Services Board

Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network
Northern Ireland Assoc of Citizens Advice Bureau
Northern Ireland Committee Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum
Playboard
Pobal
Praxis Care
Proteus
Rural Community Network
Sports Council Northern Ireland
Staff Commission for Education & Library Boards
The Local Govt. Staff Commission for NI
Training for Women Network
Western Health and Social Services Board
Youth Council NI
Action for Dysphasia Adults - Speakability
Action Mental Health
Action MS
Action on Hearing Loss
Age NI
Age Sector Platform
Armagh Travellers Support Group
Arthritis Care NI
Association for Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus (ASBAH)
Autism NI (PAPA)
Baha'i Council (NI)
Barnardo's
Belfast Islamic Centre
Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre
British Deaf Association NI
British Epilepsy Association
Carafriend
Carers NI
CAWT
Chinese Welfare Association
Child Poverty Action Group
Children's Law Centre
Chrysalis Women's Centre
Co3 Chief Officers 3rd Sector

Coalition on Sexual Orientation
Craigavon Travellers Support Group
Cystic Fibrosis Trust
Derry Well Woman
Diabetes UK (NI)
Disability Action
Down's Syndrome Association
East Down Rural Community Network
Gay and Lesbian Youth NI
Gingerbread NI
Girl Guiding Ulster
HIV Support Centre
Huntington Disease Association
ICBAN
Indian Community Centre
La Societa Italiana Irlanda del Nord
LUPUS Group
MENCAP
Mid Ulster Women's Network
Multiple Sclerosis Society (NI)
National Disability Authority (ROI)
Newry & Mourne Ethnic Minority Support Centre
Newry & Mourne Senior Citizens Consortium
NIACRO
NICMA
NICEM
Northern Ireland Council for the Homeless
Northern Ireland Disability Council
Northern Ireland Dyslexia Association
Northern Ireland Environmental Link
Northern Ireland Filipino Association
Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association
Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
Northern Ireland Association of Mental Health
Northern Ireland Youth Forum
NSPCC (NI)
Omagh Womens Area Network
Queer Space
Rainbow Project
RNIB
RNID

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Save the Children
Shelter NI
Scout Association NI
Sense NI
Simon Community
STEP (South Tyrone Empowerment Programme)
The Cedar Foundation (Formley NICOD)
The Corrymeela Community
The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
The Special Olympics Ulster
University of the 3rd Age
Victim Support (NI)
Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC)
Volunteer Now
Women's Forum NI
Women's Information Group
Women's Resource and Development Agency
Women's Support Network
Youth Action NI
Youth Initiatives

Appendix Two

Responses received to consultation on the Disability Action Plan:

Organisation: Disability Action

| Consultee Comments: | Responses from <i>safefood</i> |
|---|---|
| <p>Advise that people with disabilities should be involved in the drafting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this Disability Action Plan</p> | <p>Comment noted.</p> |
| <p>Disability Action Plan must cover, to ensure equality for all, the 5 categories of disability i.e. physical, sensory, mental health, learning and hidden disabilities.</p> | <p>Whilst acknowledging the importance of this, <i>safefood</i> feels that, as a small organisation, a more positive outcome will be achieved by focusing this particular plan on people with learning difficulties, mental health and physical disabilities.</p> |
| <p>Welcomes the identification of multiple identity issues.</p> | <p>Comment welcomed.</p> |
| <p>Advise, whilst recognising that <i>safefood</i> is a North/South body, that many of the actions are DDA 1995 obligations and not specific to DDO 2007. (Section 2)</p> | <p>Comment noted. It is <i>safefood</i>'s understanding that many of the issues and actions are similar in both jurisdictions.</p> |
| <p>Number the actions for ease of reference</p> | <p>Actions numbered</p> |

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| <p>As website action is ongoing, would ask at what stage of accessibility is the website is at so as to enable informed comment to be made.</p> <p>Outline measures to promote public life opportunities which are not confined simply to the public appointment process. safefood should highlight measures for which it has responsibility or at very least identify those public life opportunities that it may influence to increase the number of people with disabilities in public life.</p> <p>Additionally, the definition of public life within the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland DDO Guide is much broader than public appointments therefore it is not appropriate to exonerate the responsibility in this area.</p> <p>No evidence found of a specific action detailing how Safefood intends to involve people with disabilities in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Action Plan. (As para 1.3, Page 9)</p> <p>Regarding performance indicators/targets, advise that it would be more beneficial if Action Plans establish outcome driven measures which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. (SMART) This will enable Action Plans to be attainable and measured rather than creating unachievable aspirational goals</p> | <p>Ongoing actions have previously been reported in Annual Reports to Equality Commission. safefood will write to Disability Action to provide an answer to this query.</p> <p>Section added to identify this</p> <p>Comment noted</p> <p>List of organisations that were consulted with added at Appendix A. Comment noted and section added to outline methods to involve people.</p> <p>We believe that the measures we have set out meet the SMART criteria.</p> |
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| <p>which although commendable rarely achieve real change.</p> <p>Whilst recognising the efforts to prepare this DAP Disability Action believes that it requires significant redrafting taking onboard the comments above.</p> <p>Welcomes the opportunity to respond to this important draft Plan and looks forward to seeing the comments above incorporated into the revised Plan.</p> | <p>Comment noted</p> <p>Comment noted</p> |
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Organisation: Private Individual

| Consultee Comments: | Responses by <i>safefood</i> : |
|---|---|
| <p>Could <i>safefood</i> consider an action of providing employment/placements in partnership with appropriate agencies?</p> | <p><i>safefood</i> will explore this as part of Action Item No 3.</p> |
| <p>Suggest that the performance indicator of a set of meeting minutes re collaboration with Irish Wheel Chair Associate could be amended as a minute in the worst case scenario might record that no one turned up. Suggest it might be better to aspire to have an initial meeting or series of meetings or meeting with the appropriate contact to progress</p> | <p>The performance indicator has been amended to reflect this comment.</p> |
| <p>Why is obesity highlighted – is there a specific rationale for this?</p> | <p>Helping to reduce obesity is a key aspect of <i>safefood</i>'s remit to contribute to public health and wellbeing.</p> |
| <p>Given the food related challenges of those with a disability will be across both food safety and healthy eating might a cross directorate approach be appropriate for deliverables/outcomes that are more meaningful in a practical context?</p> | <p>Comment noted</p> |

Organisation: Private Individual

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| <p>Consultee Comments:</p> <p>Should there be a reference to what <i>safefood</i>'s definition of a person with a disability?</p> <p>Are the references in legislation followed as some people might not have the same thoughts as <i>safefood</i> on whether or not they are disabled?</p> | <p>Responses by <i>safefood</i>:</p> <p><i>safefood</i> relies on the definition of disability as described under the legislation of both Ireland and Northern Ireland. We are mindful that there are different definitions within both jurisdictions.</p> |
|---|--|

Organisation: National Disability Authority (NDA)

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| <p>Consultee Comments:</p> <p>Pleased to see safefood has incorporated some of NDA's guidance e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Putting in place policies and procedures to assist staff who may declare a disability.• Ensuring that at least 3% of their employees have a disability.• Asking people if they require reasonable accommodations/special requirements for attending events and for interviews.• Working with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (NI) and the National Council for the Blind (ROI) to produce audio materials on topics such as food safety and super foods. <p>In view of all-island remit, suggest that safefood should develop an integrated all-island policy that clearly merges equality and disability legislation from both jurisdictions into a clear and cohesive DAP.</p> | <p>Responses by safefood:</p> <p>Commendation welcomed.</p> <p>As an all-island body, safefood must adhere to requirements in both jurisdictions. This may prove more challenging should legislation and requirements diverge following the UK's vote to leave the European Union. However, safefood's Equality and Disability Policies both highlight the jurisdictional requirements and how safefood can work towards integrating equality and disability in an all-island approach.</p> |
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| <p>Consultee Comments:</p> <p>safefood should consider the definition of disability they wish to use to ensure they are meeting the diverse needs of people with different disabilities.</p> <p>Recommends provision is made to disability proof its existing and future services. This could be done by developing a disability impact assessment process.</p> <p>Advises the incorporation of more inclusive language and use the following terms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People or employees with disabilities instead of disabled people.• Reasonable accommodations instead of special requirements for interview and/or event• People with mental health issues/difficulties instead of people with mental health disabilities. <p>Suggests safefood should include specific actions to provide services to children, young people and adults living in residential settings in NI and ROI to increase independence and ability to look after themselves</p> | <p>Responses by safefood:</p> <p>safefood relies on the definition of disability as described under the legislation of both Ireland and Northern Ireland. We are mindful that there are different definitions within both jurisdictions.</p> <p>safefood currently equality proofs its policies and procedures.</p> <p>safefood will review all current documentation. However, there is a discrepancy between NI and ROI phraseology – the EC (NI) for example use the phrase disabled people. Therefore, we must be mindful of this.</p> <p>safefood does not provide services to consumers but promotes food safety and healthy eating among consumers generally.</p> |
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| Consultee Comments: | Responses by <i>safefood</i> : |
|--|--|
| <p>Noted that <i>safefood</i> will continue to assess and improve accessibility of website and communication materials. Suggests further consultation with Deafhear (ROI) and Action in Hearing Loss (NI) and National Autistic Society of Northern Ireland and Autism Ireland.</p> <p>Notes and welcomes inclusive and planned approach to <i>safefood</i> plans to train staff to provide services for people with mental health issues and to commission food related research in relation to people with intellectual/learning disabilities.</p> <p>Recommend that <i>safefood</i> explores feasibility of developing targeted initiatives with a number of disability organisations in addition to Irish Wheelchair Association. Other organisations could include Mental Health Ireland, the Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health and Inclusion Ireland as well as others previously mentioned above.</p> <p>Recommends <i>safefood</i> should implement targets and timeframes for all actions in DAP</p> <p>Advises <i>safefood</i> should state in Action Plan that it is developing strategic objectives around mainstreaming public services.</p> | <p>Comments noted and groups added to Action Plan</p> <p>Commendation noted</p> <p>See comments above.</p> <p>Responsibilities and time frames identified for each action.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> |

www.safefood.eu
HELPLINE
NI 0800 085 1683
ROI 1850 40 4567