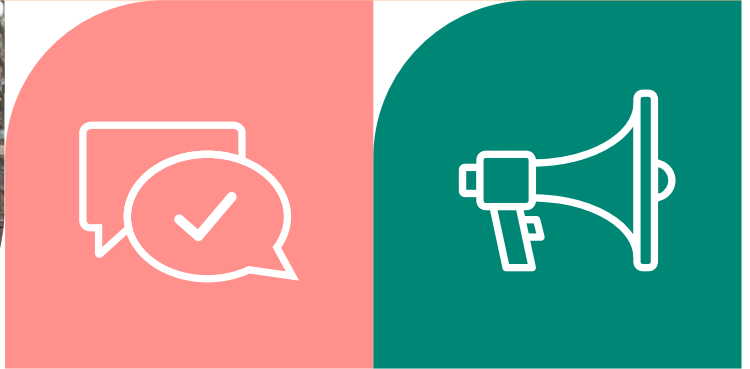
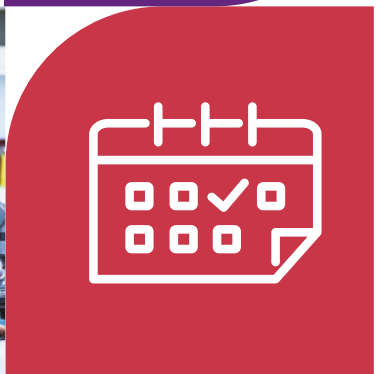


Annual Report

2020



Contributing to public health and wellbeing by promoting food safety and healthy eating on the island of Ireland

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safefood targeted relevant knowledge gaps by prioritising its research through a structured programme of horizon scanning.

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safefood networks formed dynamic and rewarding environments for the exchange of information for mutual benefit to stakeholders.

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Digital and social

safefood uses digital and social media to ensure we reach our audience on the platforms they use, where we leverage the strengths of each channel to engage, inform and influence the food-related behaviours.

Campaigns

safefood multi-disciplinary campaigns empowered and supported individuals to positively change behaviour.

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Chief Executive's Statement

When I look at this year, my first thought is of people and how their lives fundamentally changed with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Whether juggling home-schooling with working from home, or job loss, or potentially caring for those more vulnerable in their life, this past year has been one of disruption and uncertainty. I'm also struck by the dedication and commitment of people working in the frontline of public health who are an example of the best that public service can offer. At **safefood**, our people have displayed great flexibility, adaptability and innovation to continue our work promoting food safety and healthy eating during a time of upheaval caused by a global pandemic. In challenging circumstances, our staff continued to deliver important outputs across our research portfolio, education initiatives, community programmes and communications activities.

Our high-quality research projects underpin all of our work and help contribute to the wider knowledge base. One project looking into the effectiveness of portion control tools will inform ongoing and future public health campaigns in the area of health and weight. The research into meat thermometer usage will provide new,

evidence-based understanding of consumer attitudes towards these items, while the investigation into hand-washing facilities and practices in public settings was both timely and relevant. A number of new research projects also commenced during the year on topics ranging from consumer understanding of allergen information, to how to build sustainability into national healthy eating guidelines. I'm confident these and our other research projects will deliver practical outputs and insights that will have a long-lasting impact through our work for the health of people on the island.

The restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the work of our Knowledge Network, which aims to provide food professionals with a rewarding environment for knowledge-exchange and personal networking. Despite the pandemic, my colleagues were able to quickly move our in-person events and training seminars to virtual platforms which were well attended and positively received, with 16 events hosted during the year. The introduction of a dedicated podcast series for the network illustrates how new channels can help deliver topics of interest to members at a time of their choosing.

It is a credit to the team who manage the Network that membership grew by 176 members during 2020. Working with, and meeting people is at the heart of our partnership approach, and we look forward to welcoming those new and existing members in person as restrictions are eased. The pandemic has also impacted on small and medium enterprises (SME's) in the food industry. To support their needs, we began development this year on an eLearning resource to reinforce the importance of food safety and give practical advice to this sector. This resource is an exciting project which will benefit those working in the food sector and their customers through enhanced food safety.

Our Community Food Initiative scheme, which supports projects in disadvantaged communities also adapted during the year by delivering practical food education programmes remotely; one example was a four-week cooking programme attended by 57 families that offered healthy meal ingredients delivered at home supported by YouTube videos showing how to prepare and cook a healthy meal. Our work with the Healthy Living Centre Alliance in Northern Ireland on our 'Transform your Trolley' programme helped this community-led programme to increase knowledge around food shopping and meal-planning while building confidence in cooking skills among participants. Our Food Poverty Network, in partnership with the Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland, continued its important work by hosting webinars for their members. The issue of food poverty and food insecurity was especially evident during the pandemic and we are committed to helping co-ordinate a strategic approach to tackling this issue. The Obesity Action Forum also continued, albeit in an online environment, to deliver leading public health speakers to its bi-annual events with topics including the credibility of online dietary information; and the marketing of unhealthy food to children in a digital world.

Home-schooling was a feature of the pandemic and our education resources were adapted to support teachers and children with improved virtual learning. Our existing 'Handwashing with Rufus' programme for pre-school and primary school children was never more relevant, helping children learn about the importance of handwashing in a fun, engaging way. We are continuing to adapt our education materials to meet online teaching needs and offer blended learning resources to meet future demands.

Our public awareness campaigns faced their own challenges in an environment where public health messaging for tackling Covid-19 was omnipresent. For our "START" campaign, which encourages families to take the first

step towards a healthier lifestyle, we hosted a series of online, one-to-one interviews with parents during the year to better understand their lives during the pandemic and the pressures they were facing. Notwithstanding Covid-19 itself, these interviews revealed many key issues of concern for parents and gave real-world insights that informed the START campaign, which aired during May, August and November. These parent-led insights ensured the campaign was always practical and relevant. With restrictions on social gatherings impacting upon the traditional Christmas festivities, our December food safety campaign focused on home cooks with added emphasis on helping novice cooks. The use of web, social and digital communications together with new formats like Google Assist and Alexa ensured our food safety advice was shared as widely as possible; our online turkey cooking calculator was our most-viewed webpage during the year.

With public health measures mandating a move to home-working, the capability of our Corporate Operations Directorate was critical in ensuring this transition happened quickly and seamlessly. It is a credit to their unseen work that the organisation worked efficiently and without disruption throughout the pandemic. My colleagues in the organisation displayed flexibility and professionalism in ensuring our work continued and our mandate was fulfilled.















At **safefood**, we have faced challenges posed by the food environment, changes in how food is consumed, evolving media consumption habits, and wider, structural uncertainties caused by Brexit. Many of these have been amplified in the past 12 months by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on daily life. At all times, our partnership approach in tackling shared public health issues on the island has been at the heart of our work, even in the face of great uncertainty. On behalf of the **safefood** Advisory Board and all my colleagues, I would like to thank all those people, agencies and organisations who work with us. We look forward to better days ahead and future opportunities together.



Raymond Dolan

Chief Executive Officer


2020 at a glance

<p>January</p> 	<p>Sponsorship of RTE's Operation Transformation</p>	<p>June</p> 	<p>World food safety day <i>Don't wash raw chicken</i></p>
<p rowspan="3">March</p>	 <p>Covid-19</p>	<p rowspan="2">July</p> 	<p>NSMC formally appoints the new safefood Advisory Committee</p>
 <p>Food allergen masterclasses</p>		<p>Knowledge Network webinar-SARS-CoV-2 and foodborne viruses in the food industry</p>	
 <p>safefood develops a Resource efficiency action plan in line with sustainability priorities</p>	<p rowspan="3">August</p> 	<p>New safefood.net website launched</p>	
<p>May</p>	 <p>Summer BBQ campaign <i>Well Done</i></p>		<p>Instagram gets a tick and hits 5,000</p>
 <p>safefood launched its 1st series of podcasts.</p>		<p>safefood launches Fakeaway videos as healthy alternatives to the top 5 takeaway dishes</p>	
<p>June</p>	 <p>All-island Obesity Action Forum webinar</p>		<p>Knowledge Network webinar - <i>Food packaging: making the right choice for your product</i></p>

September




Online training for public food testing laboratory training- internal auditing ISO/IEC 1725:2017



All-island food poverty webinar



Healthy eating guidelines for 1-5 years old are published.



Online training for public food testing laboratory training - Laboratory information management system administration (LIMS)

October

Knowledge Network webinars:



The importance of internal auditing in maintaining food safety



An introduction to product shelf life for small food businesses



An update on milk hypersensitivity



Effective food safety part i & part II



Allergens: who's responsibility is it anyway?



Transform your Trolley

November



START campaign




Knowledge Network webinar - *emerging risks in seafood*



Food safety Christmas campaign

December



Online training- practical allergen management for (1) manufacturers (2) caterers

Our Research



safefood's promotion of food safety, nutrition and healthy eating is targeted at the whole food chain and consequently, so is our research. One of **safefood's** primary functions is to 'bring about general acceptance that responsibility for the provision of safe food is shared among producers, processors and distributors at all levels, caterers and the public'. To this effect, **safefood** considers the entire food chain in its outlook on research and ensures that our research programme is linked to and supports our primary functions.

This research is used to build the evidence base for developing communications that are supported by science that is clear, authoritative, relevant, and independent, including **safefood's** public awareness campaigns. Such scientific work also enhances our understanding of the potential hazards in the production of food and the measures needed to minimise or eliminate these hazards.

Working with key stakeholders in research and other institutions, **safefood** has fostered all-island working relationships and enhanced partnerships between research institutions across the island of Ireland (IOI).



Research Projects Overview

The following research projects were completed in 2020.

Portion control tools - do they work in practice?

This project was conducted by Ulster University. The duration of the project was 18 months from January 2019 to July 2020.

This project will provide **safe food** with an evidence base which can be incorporated into messages involving portion sizing in its public health campaigns such as START.

Assessment of the use of meat thermometers by consumers on the island of Ireland

This project was conducted by Ulster University. The duration of the project was 16 months from March 2019 to June 2020.

This project investigated current perceptions and trends in the use of meat thermometers by consumers on the island of Ireland and assessed consumer attitudes towards meat thermometers and their reported usage behaviour, identified the barriers and facilitators towards their use and, developed recommendations for overcoming these barriers.

A compendium of food chain statistics for the island of Ireland

This project was conducted by Ipsos MORI in Belfast. The duration of the project was 10 months from September 2019 to July 2020

The purpose of this project was to deliver the most up-to-date compendium of food chain statistics for the island of Ireland in a format that can be updated on an annual basis and supplemented with trend data where feasible.

An investigation of hand washing facilities and practices in various settings on the island of Ireland

This project was conducted by Ulster University. The duration of the project was 30 months from June 2018 to October 2020.

This project investigated hand hygiene behaviours and compliance in a number of settings (childcare services, public toilets and food businesses) across the island of Ireland.



4 research projects completed
5 projects commenced in 2020



The following research projects commenced in 2020

The socio-economic cost of food hypersensitivity on the island of Ireland

This project will be conducted by Technical University of Dublin in collaboration with Queen's University Belfast. The duration of the project will be 26 months from October 2020 to March 2021. The research will calculate the socioeconomic costs associated with food hypersensitivities - medically diagnosed food allergy, coeliac disease, and food intolerances / suspected food allergies (not medically diagnosed) in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The direct and indirect monetary costs will be calculated for (a) adult sufferers and (b) parents of affected children and adolescents. Similarly, intangible costs associated with quality of life will be determined.

Communication allergen information to consumers on the island of Ireland

This project is being conducted by the Excellence Ireland Quality Association (EIQA). The duration of the project shall be 12 months from 1st March 2021 to 28th February 2022.

Allergen control and allergen labelling continue to be a significant concern for both food hypersensitive consumers and food businesses throughout the island of Ireland. The Research Body, EIQA, will provide a competent analysis, evaluation and review of the current level of consumer understanding of allergen labelling, the potential for allergen cross contamination in catering settings and how this risk is communicated to consumers across the island of Ireland.

Fiscal and pricing policies related to food and non-alcoholic drinks: a review of the evidence.

This project is being conducted by Queens University Belfast. The duration of the project shall be 12 months 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021.

This research project will identify international evidence of approaches and effectiveness (including failures) of fiscal and pricing policies related to food and non-

alcoholic drinks, in order to improve diet and prevent non communicable disease. The study shall review the evidence in relation to dietary intake, health outcomes, health inequalities and the equitability of the tax burden; and to thereafter identify the fiscal and pricing policies with most practical relevance for implementation on the IOI with reference to political sustainability and food policy.

Review of international practice on build sustainability into national healthy eating guidelines and practical implications for policy.

This project is being conducted by University College Cork. The duration of the project shall be 18 months from 1st January 2021 to June 30th 2022.

This project will take a mixed methods approach to identify best practice to building sustainability in healthy eating guidelines. A rapid review will add to the scant evidence to enhance the current understanding of best practice to integrating sustainability into national healthy eating food-based dietary guidelines. This will inform a larger quantitative online study to provide further insight on current beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and behaviours of a representative sample of adults on the island of Ireland to sustainable healthy diets.

Secondary analysis of dietary survey data of children's diets on the island of Ireland.

This project is being conducted by Cork Institute of Technology. The duration of the project shall be 12 months from 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021.

The aim of this study is to provide regional and national evidence for public health messages to support healthy eating among children aged 2-12 years and thereby support the START campaign. To do this, it will exploit the existing publicly funded dietary survey data on the island of Ireland. There are two aspects to this analysis all of which gravitate around the individual and collective position of snacks and of treat foods in children's diets, and subsequently characterisation of any associations with dietary quality, body weight status and food related behaviours.



Publications

1 research report was published by **safefood** in 2020, covering food safety and healthy eating.

Cutting out gluten

As the gluten-free diet has increased in popularity amongst consumers, the market for gluten-free products has also expanded. This is due to several reasons: advocacy of the gluten-free diet, and other so-called “elimination” diets, by celebrities and health gurus, which is taking place against a backdrop of increasing public awareness of the link between diet and health.

This report sets out to assess the nutritional contribution to the diet of consumers on the island of Ireland of foods that typically contain gluten. It also surveys the nutritional profile of gluten-free snack foods found in supermarkets. Research was also carried out to assess consumers’ perceptions of gluten-free products and diets, and their reasons for choosing gluten-free products.

The results will provide an increased awareness of the nutritional issues associated with the gluten-free diet for “lifestyle consumers” – i.e., those consumers who do not need to avoid gluten for medical reasons.

5 Publications were published for consumers and businesses in 2020

- Sugar content of popular yoghurt brands in Irish - Cad a itheann do pháiste ina iógart?
- Fuel your body – for the teenage sports person.
- Sugar content of popular drinks in Irish - Siúcra i ndeochanna: an fhírinne
- Healthy Lunchboxes – Practical tips for you and your children on how to prepare a healthy lunchbox.
- Sugar content of popular cereals in Irish - Cad atá sa ghránach i itheann tú?



Our Networks



safefood's unique north/south position promotes cooperation linkages with stakeholders working in the food sector, public health and health promotion to strengthen the integrity of the food chain and improve public health.

safefood has, as part of its legislative remit, an obligation to promote awareness of food safety issues amongst professionals with an interest in, or responsibility for food safety including the food industry.

Knowledge Network

Members of the Knowledge Network form a community of nearly 3,500 professionals working in food businesses, environmental health, regulatory agencies, public health, food testing laboratories, research and education.

The Knowledge Network (KN) aims to form a dynamic and rewarding environment for the exchange of food safety information for mutual benefit of its members. It aims to bring together those involved in knowledge creation and application and policy development to support and enhance food safety. The Knowledge Network has created and augmented linkages across the island of Ireland between food safety professionals throughout the whole food chain since 2011.

safefood's objectives for the Knowledge Network over the three years 2019 – 2022 are:

- To raise awareness and provide opportunities for the sharing and learning of best practice.
- Increase food safety knowledge on the island of Ireland.
- To further develop multidisciplinary and cross-jurisdictional working relationships between food safety professionals.
- To provide a reliable source of expertise for **safefood** with a view to exploring existing concerns.



- To identify emerging issues in food safety and enhancing the in-house evidence base.
- To promote cooperation, collaboration, and synergies between professionals in the food safety arena throughout the island of Ireland.

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in food safety working across the entire agri-food sector. To help achieve the goals of the Network, **safefood** brought together in late 2019, ten experts in the areas of food microbiology, food hypersensitivity, food business/research, food industry/trade, small food business supports, food service/catering, behavioural science, environmental health, global food chain & research, and public food safety laboratory services. This Expert Group strategically leads our Network, guiding activities and advising on required training and supports, new services for members, and providing insights on food safety risks and emerging issues. The issues the Network focus on is prioritised based on their impact on public health and the wider food chain. These include chemical and microbiological food safety, allergen management, food production and processing issues, food fraud/crime, new food safety innovations, as well as broader topics which may impact on food safety, including trade and economic issues, climate change and sustainability.

The inclusion of a food hypersensitivity expert and the establishment of a Food Hypersensitivity sub-group has yielded an ambitious plan which will be the focus of our work for the remainder of the programme. The importance of applying behavioural science to our activities has been previously recognised. This will ensure the resources we develop are tailored to inform and engage the audience and most likely to effect behavioural change.

Horizon-scanning for new developments and potential risks is a key function of the KN and this is achieved through conferences, webinars and publications and also through

monitoring of the index of current and emerging issues. This is done with the support of the Expert Group and ensures that our focus and activities are directed appropriately.

With the support of this Expert Group, our all-island initiative endeavours to ensure that members have access to the very latest developments in food safety as they emerge. North-South cooperation and collaboration is a key focus of the Network, and this is achieved through partnerships, events, webinars, networking opportunities and interviews. This has helped to expand the range of expertise we can bring to our members and to maximise the reach of our outputs.

As well as the clear benefits to members of the Knowledge Network and the wider agri-food community, the activity of the Network serves to raise the profile of **safefood** amongst food SMEs, researchers, regulators, and others working in food safety. Our access to expertise and the high quality of the network outputs helps to enhance **safefood's** reputation as a trusted partner who can inform and advise.

During 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on Knowledge Network (KN) activities. Our typical annual portfolio over 30-40 different events had to be speedily transitioned to virtual platforms thus facilitating remote engagement, and our webinars and online training events have been well attended and received. However, the networking opportunities afforded by in-person events cannot be replicated online and some events had to be postponed. The effects of the pandemic on the agri-food sector have been significant and we have used podcasts, articles, and training webinars to inform and advise our members through the challenges they have faced. Food industry needs were addressed through webinars, with one in particular run with Campden BRI in the UK, which proved hugely popular internationally. Catering and other food businesses also received advice



on operating as takeaways during restrictions. Food testing laboratories are a key audience for **safefood** and over the past 12 months the KN delivered several training courses tailored specifically for this audience.

Science is at the core of all our activities, and we continued to keep our members up to date with the latest news, research, and updates on current and emerging issues. Thought leader articles brought new developments and insights on the future of the agri-food industry to a wide audience while The Food Chain magazine and the monthly e-Network News featured a range of interviews, articles and news updates covering all aspects of food safety and the wider food chain. Podcasts were introduced as a new and interesting way of informing and engaging our audiences – both for technical entities and consumers.

Some features of the Knowledge Network during 2020

- ✓ Membership of the Network at the end of 2020 was 3,461 members
- ✓ Membership increased by 5.1% from 2019 with 176 new members joining the network.
- ✓ 12 Editions of Network News were published.
- ✓ 4 meetings of the Expert Group were held.
- ✓ 16 food safety events held covering training, information dissemination and specific upskilling, attended by 1,006 participants.
- ✓ 7 food safety podcasts were produced.
- ✓ The network's 'Food Chain' magazine was published 3 times in 2020 to over 2,300 subscribers.

Brexit also presents challenges as new arrangements come into force and will take time to be fully understood. This is likely to remain a focus of the regulatory authorities throughout the island of Ireland, and the KN will need to keep abreast of the new arrangements and possible implications for food safety.



5% increase in Knowledge Network membership



Membership grew by **176** during **2020**



Over **16** Knowledge Network events hosted in 2020.

Knowledge Network working with Small Medium Enterprise's (SME's)

The Knowledge Network has continued to focus on supporting the food SME sector to understand and implement good and robust food safety practices through online workshops - while the online webinars did not allow for the face-to-face interaction that has been so valued in previous years, the events were well-attended with good levels of interaction and excellent feedback. Other events aimed at those working in food SME's include webinars on food packaging, looking at why packaging so important, the different types of packaging and sustainability, as well as the importance of internal audit in maintaining food safety, providing a practical approach to carrying out an internal food safety audit and showing how internal audits have been a catalyst for positive food safety change in many companies.

In addition, an interactive training course on product shelf-life was also provided for small food businesses,

exploring what needs to be considered when determining the shelf-life of a product, including understanding the characteristics of the food and what microorganisms might grow in it, the importance of packaging, and understanding laboratory results.

In 2020, work also began on the development of eLearning tools to support food safety training for small food businesses (including those working in production, processing, retail, catering and food service). The delivery of an eLearning resource, 'safefood for business' tailored for food SMEs in 2021 will allow access to free online training in practical food safety, which will be a huge benefit to those who have difficulty attending off-site training courses. This resource will enhance understanding of why food safety is important, what can happen if correct procedures are not followed, and provide practical advice on how to meet their legal responsibilities. The promotion of a better food safety culture within businesses and raising awareness of **safefood** and the services we offer are key benefits that will arise from the resource.



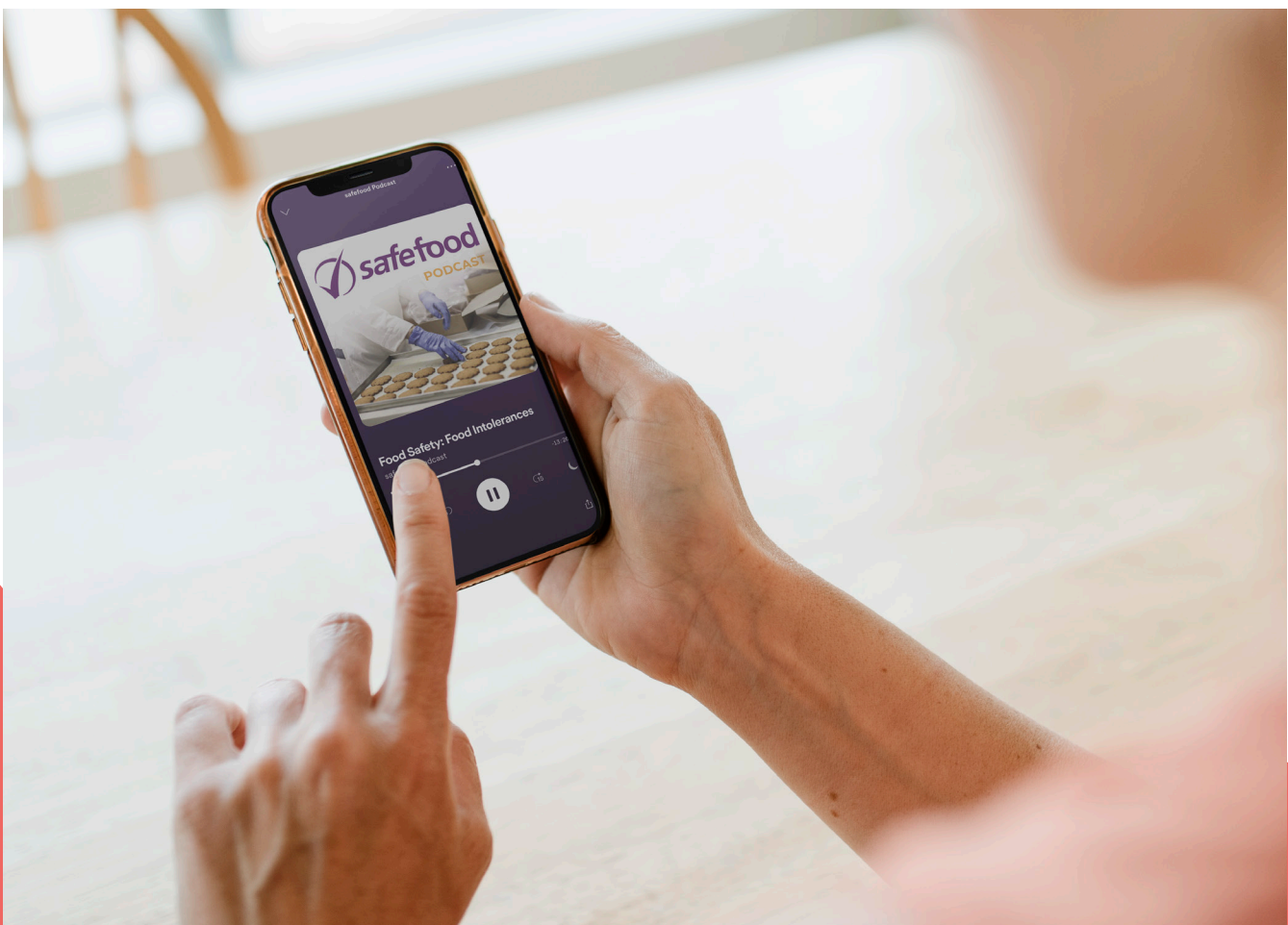
Food allergy and hypersensitivity

Food allergy and hypersensitivity continued to be one of the most important issues facing the food sector through 2020, with high demand for assistance, particularly in food service. The Knowledge Network, in association with the Food Safety Authority Ireland and Health Service Executive, delivered 11 masterclasses to students and staff at catering colleges across Ireland. Other activities on this topic included a one-day conference hosted by **safefood** and the Institute for Global Food Security at Queen's University Belfast which focussed on consumer, industry and regulatory perspectives, including the use of precautionary allergen labelling.

Other food hypersensitivity events included webinars on the risks associated with having a food hypersensitivity, particularly an allergy to milk, and allergen control responsibilities from the perspective of the food business auditor. SME allergen workshops provided practical training on allergen management for food manufacturers and food caterers.

Podcasts

The introduction of a series of podcasts on food safety topics brought a new service to our members in 2020. The aim of the series was to explore topics in a less formal and more conversational way, which can be listened to while people are walking, in the car, or carrying out other activities. Five topics were covered under the 'Food Safety for SMEs' series including Cleaning & Hygiene, Food Packaging, Allergen Control, Allergen labelling for takeaways and distance selling, and the Impact of Covid-19 on the Food Chain. Under the 'Food Safety' series two topics were addressed – Milk allergies and intolerances, and Remote Auditing. In total, 554 downloads had been recorded within the 90-day post release period for these podcasts collectively.



Workshops and seminars held in 2020

Date	Topic	Type	Audience	No. Attendees
Feb 2020	Food allergen masterclass (Dublin McKee Barracks)	Masterclass	Army chefs	55
Mar 2020	Food allergen masterclass (Athlone IT)	Masterclass	Culinary arts students	60
Mar 2020	Food allergen masterclass (Dundalk IT)	Masterclass	Catering & hospitality students	21
Mar 2020	Food allergen masterclass (Dublin TUD)	Masterclass	Food product development, culinary arts students	31
July 2020	SARS-CoV-2 and foodborne viruses in the food industry – current issues	Webinar	Food industry, research, regulators, public health	424
Aug 2020	Food packaging: making the right choice for your product	Webinar	Food businesses, particularly SMEs	27
Sept 2020	Internal auditing ISO/IEC 17025:2017	Training (online)	Public food safety testing laboratories	15
Oct 2020	The Importance of internal audit in maintaining food safety	Webinar	Food SME operators & staff	60
Oct 2020	An introduction to product shelf life for small food businesses	Training (online)	Food SME operators & staff	24
Oct 2020	An update on milk hypersensitivity	Webinar	Food industry, incl. SMEs	24
Oct 2020	Laboratory Information management system administration	Training (online)	Public food safety testing laboratories	8
Oct 2020	Effective food safety food SMEs –Part 1	Webinar	Food SME operators & staff	47
Oct 2020	Effective food safety food SMEs –Part 2	Webinar	Food SME operators & staff	32
Oct 2020	Allergens: whose responsibility is it anyway?	Webinar	Food retail & food service businesses	28
Nov 2020	Emerging risks in seafood	Webinar	Seafood industry, research, regulators	122
Dec 2020	Practical allergen management for (1) food manufacturers & (2) food caterers	Training (online)	Food manufacturers food caterers	28



Over **40,000** people have engaged with the CFI since it began.

CFI has funded **30** organisations



Currently working with **14** community organisations in 2020

The new CFI at home initiative funded a further **18** organisations



Community Food Initiative

safefood's Community Food Initiatives Programme (CFIs) aims to positively influence the eating habits of families with children in low-income communities by focusing on the skills and knowledge around food and healthy eating, healthier shopping and enhanced cooking skills. All of these are tangible, transferable skills that can benefit an entire community. The CFI model demonstrates how collaborating with communities can influence healthier food choices and learning lifelong skills. Funding of the Community Food Initiatives (CFI's) on the island of Ireland began in 2010, using a community led approach has helped over 40,000 people by offering real and practical help in local communities by funding 30 organisations.

Community food initiative in 2020

2020 was the 2nd year of the fourth 3-year cycle of CFI projects (2019-2021). Fourteen community organisations were recruited to the new term, 9 in Ireland and 5 in Northern Ireland to deliver the CFI programme. The CFI is administered at a local level by SECAD Partnership CLG.

The focus of the CFI programme in 2019 – 2021 is families with children up to the age of 12 years. Support was provided on developing skills and knowledge that positively influence the eating habits and basic food skills among families/ individuals in low-income areas. Each local Community Food Initiative implemented the following six themes:



Supporting community awareness/
knowledge of healthy eating

Cooking skills

Food safety and hygiene

Healthy shopping

Preventing food wastage through budgeting
and food/ meal planning skills

Improving the availability and access to safe &
healthy food in the community, complementing
existing structures offering healthy options:
community cafés, street parties etc.)

The full list of recipients of the Community Food Initiatives (CFIs) funding 2019-21 are:

- Bogside & Brandywell Initiative; (Derry)
- New Lodge Duncairn Community Health Partnership; (Belfast)
- North Antrim Community Network; (Ballymena)
- The Resurgam Trust; (Lisburn)
- County Armagh Community Development (Armagh)
- Ballyhoura Development CLG; (Charleville)
- Carlow County Development Partnership; (Bagenalstown)
- Co Wicklow Community Partnership; (Arklow)
- Dublin North West Area Partnership; (Finglas)
- Galway City Partnership; (Galway)
- Inishowen Development Partnership; (Inishowen)
- IRD Duhallow CLG; (Newmarket, Co Cork)
- Offaly Local Development Company; (Tullamore)
- South Tipperary Development; (Cahir)

Due to restrictions introduced to deal with Covid-19, CFI events moved to an online platform. **safefood** and SECAD were extremely proud of how the CFIs adapted to this change and were able to create innovative ways

to keep the programme going. Each CFI was asked to look at how they could continue to help families access support and learning whilst at home.

An example of a creative programme to keep CFI participants involved and maintain contact is a 4-week remote cooking programme as detailed below.

The Aim of this Initiative was to help families to

- Learn new cooking skills at home.
- Build their confidence in their own kitchen.
- Create healthy affordable meals that are perfect for the whole family
- Do something together during lockdown at home.

57 families took part in the initiative which involved:

- Each week ingredients for a healthy meal were carefully put together for our 57 families by a local supplier.
- Collected, bagged up at a social distance and delivered to each of the family's front door.
- It was a mystery to families each week what they would be having for dinner that evening.
- Children waited patiently for our staff to pull up outside before running to their front doors to see what was in the bag.
- A Printed recipe was placed in each bag.
- A **safefood** YouTube was sent via text to each household soon after the ingredients arrived demonstrating how to prepare, cook and present each meal.
- Follow up calls to each family were made each week to see how they were getting on and provide help where it was needed.

The successful remote delivery of healthy eating programmes by the CFIs during the COVID-19 pandemic led to an initiative called 'CFI at Home' and the campaign 'Transform your trolley'. CFI at Home provided additional funding to community groups to deliver healthy eating programmes during the pandemic at a time where they were at greatest need in disadvantaged communities.

All-island Food Poverty Network

Food poverty, defined as the inability to access a nutritionally adequate diet, is a significant issue for many people on the island of Ireland.

Although the cost of healthy food is a major factor, the inability to access a healthy diet is a complex issue that incorporates education, transport, literacy, culture, and environmental planning. Food poverty is yet another outcome of broader determinants of health.

The Network was established in 2009 to provide a co-ordinated and strategic approach to tackling food poverty on the island of Ireland. It supports the development of consensus on related issues, collaboration, and shared learning. The Network is co-chaired by **safefood** and the Food Standards Agency, Northern Ireland.

Eighteen organisations are represented on the forum from Government departments and agencies, academia and NGOs. Members meet on a regular basis to share experiences and knowledge to help address the issue of food poverty on the island.

The network prioritises the following activities:

Advocacy and communication

Provide support, deliberation and partnership, when appropriate, among network members in advocating for food poverty at a range of levels from policy to practice.

Evidence

Discuss existing/new data and gaps in the evidence base on food poverty on the island of Ireland at each meeting, build consensus and identify potential opportunities for addressing the information gaps.

Resources

Share information on new/existing programmes and resources among members

The 6th annual conference of the network took place in October by Webinar. The topical focus of the event shared the challenges and learnings involved in responding to food poverty/insecurity during the Covid-19 pandemic in different jurisdictions. Speakers from academia, Government and community groups shared their experiences.

The Food Poverty network is supported by the publication of a bi-annual newsletter, 'All-island Food Poverty Network news'. Launched for the first time in 2017, this newsletter promotes the sharing of information and the exchange of best practice, whilst providing an overview of current research, news coverage, events and reports in the area of obesity. Two editions were published in 2020 to over 200 subscribers.

All-island Obesity Action Forum

The All-island Obesity Action Forum was established in December 2008 to support the implementation of obesity policies in both Northern Ireland (NI) and Ireland. It consists of stakeholders from over 31 different organisations.

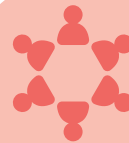
The forum provides an ideal platform for partnership and cohesive working on the island of Ireland by promoting networking, collaboration and exchange of best practice.

The All-island Obesity Action Forum launched its e-bulletin the All-island Obesity News in April 2009. It aims to support the work of the Forum by promoting the sharing of information and exchange of best practice. The monthly e-bulletin highlights obesity-related events, news, reports and research.

Twelve editions of All-island Obesity News were published in 2020 to over 578 subscribers, a 10 % increase on 2019 subscribers.

As part of its work, the forum holds bi-annual workshops. The topic for the first All-island Obesity action forum workshop of 2020 was titled 'What can the public believe? Navigating weight and health information'.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions the forum hosted their first digital workshop with 159 delegates joining live. The programme explored the credibility of information available on diet, physical activity and body weight on the island of Ireland. Viewpoints of the expert, the patient living with obesity and the media were heard. Dr Robert O'Connor from the Irish Cancer Society opened the webinar discussing credible lifestyle information from the perspective of the Irish Cancer Society. Patient advocates shared the impact misleading lifestyle information has had on their journeys with obesity. Lastly, NI journalist and former BBC Newsline presenter Sarah Travers, gave the media perspective on the role that they can play in reducing the amount of misinformation, and discussed how health professionals can better engage with the media to ensure that credible information is coming to the fore.



The forum includes stakeholders from **31** organisations



10% growth in subscribers to the All-island obesity Newsletter in 2020



Over **300** delegates attended the two bi-annual workshops.

The second bi-annual workshop of 2020 was once again hosted by webinar titled 'The hidden influencer – tackling marketing of unhealthy food to children in today's digital world'. The programme focused on the latest evidence on the impact, and areas of action, for the marketing of foods and drinks to children. Dr Mimi Tatlow-Golden Senior Lecturer in Developmental Psychology & Childhood with the Open University discussed the impact of marketing unhealthy food to children, with particular emphasis on digital media. Dr João Breda for the World Health Organization (WHO) outlined national policy options and the work the WHO and Europe are doing to monitor the situation through a framework know as CLICK.

Partnership working

Working in partnership is at the heart of **safefood's** role as a North/South body. Whether in our communication campaigns, scientific research or professional networks, our partnership approach brings many positive connections and long-lasting relationships on the island of Ireland.

Minimum nutritional standards in health and social care in Northern Ireland

safefood, in partnership with the Public Health Agency and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in Northern Ireland continued to fund and support the implementation of the Standards in Healthcare facilities in Northern Ireland. During 2020, the Standards were reviewed to reflect the most up to date evidence and new resources were developed to support the standards, including a Vending Policy.

Food in schools forum

The food in schools forum was jointly established in 2009 by the NI Departments of Education and Health to provide strategic leadership and guidance on the NI Food in Schools policy. **safefood** is one of 9 organisations represented on the forum. The aim of the forum is to support the implementation of Food in School policy in Northern Ireland.

In 2020 during the Covid 19 pandemic while children were at home from school information was disseminated to families in receipt of free school meals. The Education Authority sent out messages on Twitter linking families to the **safefood** Start 5 day meal planner and food safety information from FSA NI. Regular update meetings were held with the Food in Schools Coordinator to discuss **safefood's** sponsorship of 'Veg power - eat them to defeat them' initiative.



Campaigns

Partnership-working helps our public awareness campaigns achieve a greater reach among audiences and delivers a consistent approach across many sectors including health, community and education. **safefood** would like to thank the following organisations for their support of **safefood** campaigns in 2020:

The Health Service Executive, The Public Health Agency, Healthy Ireland, The Department of Health ROI, The Department of Health NI, The Healthy Living Alliance Northern Ireland, Early Childhood Ireland, Early Years Northern Ireland, The Community Food Initiatives, SECAD.

Supporting policy

safefood is a member of Obesity policy groups in Ireland and NI.

Ireland

safefood is also a member of the Healthy Eating subgroup of the ROI obesity prevention oversight implementation group. The Healthy Eating subgroup oversaw the publication of *Healthy eating guidelines for 1-5 year olds*, with **safefood** looking after the design element of the publication. In 2020 the group also began drafting nutrition standards for the pre-school sector for publication in 2021.

NI

safefood participated in a workshop held in Belfast to identify the priorities of the implementation group for the remaining 3 years of the *Fitter futures for all obesity strategy*. Work of the implementation group will focus on a Whole systems approach. A whole systems approach involves identifying all the factors involved in Obesity e.g. health, environment, social and tackling all of them as a whole rather than focusing on one element.



6% of web traffic was to the START hub

Education

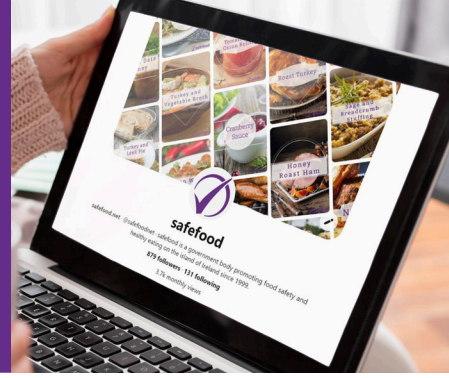


With the changes in our food supply chain and lifestyles, it is important that young people are educated on the importance of food safety, food hygiene and nutrition. **safefood** recognises that teachers play a vital role in developing the habits of young people that can last a lifetime.

During 2020 **safefood** continued to promote its education resources to primary and post primary schools on the island of Ireland. Work began on updating the popular food safety resource '**safefood** for life'. This resource provides training on basic food hygiene to transition year, home economics and Youth Reach students with the opportunity to gain a certificate recognised by industry. The updated resource will be available in an interactive online format in 2021.






Digital and social









Effective promotion of health and wellbeing messages enables people to make significant and positive differences to their lives in many ways. The broad communications landscape is changing at an astonishing rate, opening up a new range of possibilities in how we promote our messages. It is a time of great change in the way people access information every day. The area of health communications has opened up considerably since **safefood** first started over 20 years ago.

safefood uses a broad range of digital and social media channels to communicate with its audience.

Top social media and google ad statistics 2020

	Paid Facebook advertising generated 19.4 million impressions and reach of 1.9 million	27% increase in Facebook organic impressions to 3.5 million	 10% increase in Twitter organic impressions to 1.7 million
47% increase in Facebook organic reach to 3.2 million	17% increase in Facebook organic engaged users to 83,669	Paid Twitter advertising generated 5.8 million impressions	
Google search, display and video advertising generating 28.9 million impressions and 2.2 million engagements (clicks or views)			

Top web statistics 2020

 3.9 million website page views	2,100 podcast downloads 	 24% increase in page views from Northern Ireland	6% of web traffic was to the START hub 	<h3>Top 10 web pages</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Food Pyramid 2. Turkey cooking calculator 3. BMI calculator 4. Groceries and COVID-19 5. Chicken and broccoli bake recipe 6. safefood homepage 7. Steps to handwashing 8. Operation Transformation 2020 (Transform your trolley) 9. Pancakes 10. Homemade burger recipe
109,000 visits to information on Covid-19 and groceries (fourth most visited page in 2020) 		 10% increase in time spent on the website		

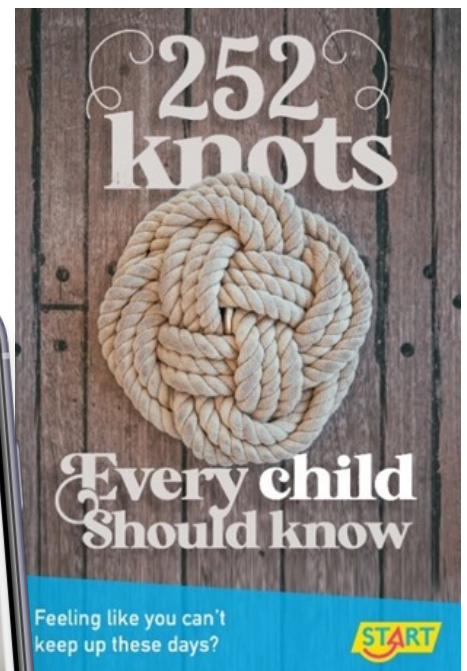
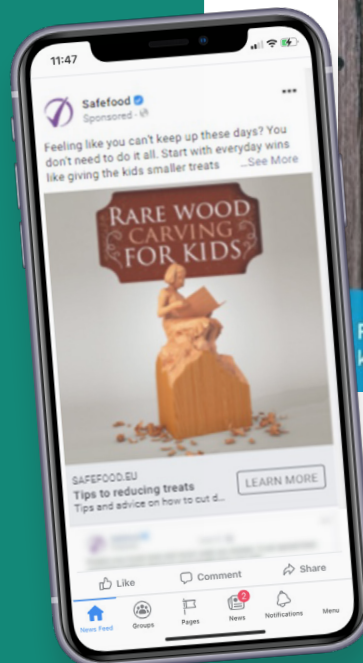
Our Campaigns



Our key messages of food safety, food hygiene and nutrition are communicated using a combination of advertising, public relations, direct marketing, digital and social media, events, publications, sponsorship and the **safefood** website.

Childhood obesity - START

Maintaining a healthy weight in children is a major public health challenge on the island of Ireland. To help address this, **safefood**, in partnership with both Departments of Health (Ireland and Northern Ireland), Healthy Ireland, the Health Service Executive and the Public Health Agency, embarked on a 5-year public awareness campaign called 'START'. The campaign began in Autumn 2017 and will continue until the end of 2022. It constitutes one of the actions of the Healthy Weight for Ireland 2016 – 2025 strategy and covers an area of work outlined in the Fitter Futures for All 2012 – 2022 strategy (NI).



START aims to be a campaign that inspires parents and carers to take the first step and ongoing steps for their kids' health by starting with one small change, 'a daily win', and encourages them to persist at those wins no matter how often life intervenes to derail them. The campaign aims to be practical, empathetic, and supportive.

START addresses 7 key behaviours that relate to a healthy body weight. The evidence-based campaign messages promote behaviour change and healthy lifestyle habits in children and their families in line with healthy eating and physical activity guidance, specifically; families are encouraged and supported to:

- Minimise intake of foods high in fat, salt and sugar
- Establish water and milk as routine drinks
- Give children appropriate child-sized portion sizes
- Increase healthier food choices – more fruit, vegetables and salad
- Increase physical activity levels
- Limit screen-time
- Have an appropriate sleep routine and length.

The onset of Covid-19 on the island of Ireland fundamentally changed how families lived their lives. Parents had to juggle home-schooling with working from home, or job loss, possibly caring for elderly relatives while also practising social distancing and other measures to mitigate the spread of the virus. This first isolation phase was an uncertain time. To put even more pressure on parents, they were also bombarded with advice on all the things they should be doing at this time to 'be more productive at home' – this included teaching new languages, skills, home-cooking, arts & crafts and so on.

The May phase of the campaign set out to offer parents real support, providing practical help and advice on how to navigate these tricky times. It supported them to make small changes like limiting treats and screen time and increasing physical activity, but also provided reassurance that they didn't need to 'do it all.' In approaching this from a humorous perspective, the campaign sought to engage people's attention and spark a conversation about staying healthy while under pressure and in isolation.

In qualitative research carried out with parents in June 2020 following months of Covid-19 restrictions and home-

schooling, parents identified altered sleep patterns as a key issue for them in their struggle to maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle for their children. Those who had managed to maintain a routine identified this as key to maintaining other healthy behaviours. Additional market research in both jurisdictions to investigate the changes to sleep patterns for children underlined the impact of changing sleep patterns on health and wellbeing of children.

The August phase of the START campaign aimed to be an ally to parents, providing practical help and advice on how to navigate a return to routine for the new school year, with an emphasis on re-establishing sleep routines. Phase 7 set out to offer parents real support and recognised that once again 'It takes a hero to be the bad guy' as parents reinstated healthy sleep routines to help establish corresponding healthy dietary and activity routines. The campaign aimed to relate to parents by showing the reality of parenting under pressure and modelled behaviours that help establish better sleep routines.

To help inform the campaign messages during uncertain times, a series of qualitative research interviews were carried out with parents during May, July and September 2020. The interviews revealed a series of key issues of concern for parents, unsurprisingly, the issue of Covid-19 eclipsed concerns for all other matters. At the time of research, the island was seven months into a serious public health pandemic. Parents also told of their aversion to definitive or negative instructions and a desire for some positivity in their lives. Encouragingly, parents expressed a preference for prioritising 'family time' to ensure their children were protected as well as being happy and healthy.

These insights helped inform the November phase of the campaign, which focused on reframing family time as an opportunity for re-introducing healthier habits at home. The title for the November phase was 'making the most family time' which encouraged using family time as an opportunity to achieve 'one daily win' and be healthier as a family.

After a particularly challenging year, which saw a crowded market for public health messaging due to the Covid-19 pandemic **safefood** and partners took the opportunity to take stock of the campaign and evaluated the first three years to inform the remaining two years of the campaign.

Handwashing

During the Covid-19 pandemic **safefood's** handwashing campaign, featuring Rufus the handwashing hero, came into its own. Never had there been a campaign more topical or well-suited. As the campaign had already been running for two-years before the onset of the pandemic, **safefood** was well placed to react and to provide age-appropriate information to protect young children. The campaign was extended from the pre-school sector to include children in P1 in Northern Ireland and Junior infants in Ireland.

safefood continued to make use of our big, friendly, furry monster to launch the latest phase of its Handwashing programme, which aimed to help make learning about good handwashing habits fun for young children and help keep bacteria like E. coli and the virus Covid-19 from spreading. All campaign assets were widely shared with relevant stakeholders in a bid to reinforce the importance of handwashing to stop the spread of the virus.

The Minister for Education in Northern Ireland, Peter Weir MLA endorsed the roll out of the programme in all statutory and non-statutory pre-school and primary schools across the jurisdiction.

9,000 + pre-schools and primary schools on the island of Ireland received the Rufus handwashing packs.



Over one in three parents (35%) claim to have used aids to help teach their children about handwashing in the past 6 months.

Almost one in four parents (24%) were aware of the Rufus Handwashing pack, with schools (37%) and crèche (34%) being the most common ways of finding out about the resource.

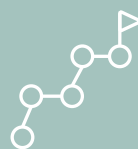




95% of pre-schools received the Rufus pack compared to 68% in 2019, and 99% of said they used it every day.



More than **eight in ten** parents (85%) whose children used the resource believe that it has changed their child's handwashing behaviour. This figure is significantly higher in ROI (91%) than in NI (65%).



There was positive behaviour noted, with an **increase** in children remembering the 5 steps from 53% in 2019 to 68% in 2021.

When asked if the pack helped reinforce handwashing, **87%** of pre-school and **92%** of primary school teachers answered yes.



Almost half of parents (49%) who were aware of the Rufus Handwashing Resource Pack have used it at home. This figure was 48% in ROI and increased to 56% in NI.



Transform your trolley

safefood and the Healthy Living Centre Alliance in Northern Ireland teamed up to support families to transform their trollies with a healthier, balanced food shop. Planning the weekly shop is key to healthy eating, without a shopping strategy people often come home with treat foods and not enough ingredients to make full meals. The aim of the community-led programme was to increase knowledge around meal-planning, encourage healthy food shopping and enhance basic cooking skills to help people make practical changes towards a healthier long-term diet. Healthy living Centres delivered a series of workshops which were supported by a campaign webpage and social media which provided guides and advice around meal planning, food shopping and healthy eating to help families make the small, practical changes needed for a healthier life.

Thirteen healthy living centres took part in the programme, with each delivering a 6 week online nutritional programme alongside a social media campaign. Over 40,000 people were exposed to the campaign messages through different social media channels. The post campaign survey shows a marked improvement for a different number of behaviours, for example, those who write a shopping list most of the time were up to 60% from 15% pre-campaign. 23% of those who took

part are now meeting the 5-a-day recommendation for fruit and vegetables, this is up from 6%. Almost all who participated felt that the programme changed the way families eat/ will eat in the future (98%) and 99% now recognise **safefood** as a reliable source of information.

Operation Transformation

safefood used the consumer campaign Transform your Trolley in support of its sponsorship of RTE's Operation Transformation. The aim of the campaign was once again to encourage consumers to have a more balanced and healthier food shop. **safefood** teamed up with Operation Transformation nutritionist Aoife Hearne and County Down magician Joel Mawhinney to show people you do not have to be a magician to transform your trolley.

The campaign focused on 4 key steps to a more balanced and healthy food shop including checking the cupboards, fridge and freezer, planning your meals, writing a shopping list and doing a visual check of the trolley prior to checkout to keep any eye on unplanned items and the balance of healthy versus non-healthy foods. **safefood** were at the Operation Transformation 5 Km run in Phoenix Park to encourage runners and distributed 2,500 bags for life, including reusable water bottles and leaflet with tips from the campaign.





safefood's Andrew Castles and home cook hero Suzie Lee at the launch of the NI Christmas campaign

Food safety Christmas campaign

Christmas is a key time for **safefood** to communicate food safety advice around safe storage, handling, preparation and cooking of turkey. With more than 1 million turkeys cooked each year, home kitchens are busier than any other time of the year. Given that preparing and cooking turkey typically involves the four principles of food safety – cooking, cleaning, chilling and cross-contamination, **safefood** is proactive during December in reminding those who cook, of these key preventative behaviours.

For 2020, restrictions on social gatherings due to Covid-19 meant that the traditional Christmas dinner was going to be very different from previous years – a smaller gathering was advised, visiting other homes discouraged, and for any family who did choose to visit, a much shorter duration of visit was recommended. In addition, turkey farmers warned during November that they could not meet increasing consumer demand for smaller-sized turkeys, which was driven by the social restrictions mentioned above. With this in mind, the focus for the 2020 campaign was on communicating with novice Christmas cooks, promoting the newly updated **safefood** chatbot as well as our established online cooking calculator. This continues to position **safefood** as the trusted source for food safety advice at Christmas.

Launched on 3 December, the 2020 Christmas campaign was aimed at all home cooks but with an emphasis on helping those novice cooks. 17% of 18-34 years olds in Northern Ireland and 9%, or approximately 315,000 people, in Ireland were expected to be cooking their first ever Christmas dinner in 2020. The goal of the campaign was to increase visits to the Christmas hub on the **safefood** website and use of our other information tools and resources. For this year, there was added emphasis on promoting a new **safefood** Chatbot, which was available on Google Assist and Alexa as well as on Facebook Messenger as it had been since 2017. The website had everything needed, food safety tips, a cooking time calculator for your turkey and tasty leftover recipes. The month of December is the busiest month of the year on our website and in 2020, more than **110,000** people visited our site between Christmas Eve and Christmas Day to find great Christmas cooking advice.

Acclaimed Chef, Paul Flynn and home cook hero Suzie Lee endorsed the campaign in Ireland and Northern Ireland, respectively.



338,398 recorded page views to the **safefood** website in December.

46% of web traffic was to the online cooking calculator.



December 2020 traffic increased by **126.4%** in comparison to November 2020.

Total reach achieved by PR coverage was **4m+** in Ireland and in Northern Ireland approx. **5m.**



The online turkey cooking calculator was the **most viewed page** in 2020.





World food safety day

Campylobacter is the most common cause of bacterial food poisoning on the island of Ireland. Those most at risk from bacterial food poisoning are the very young, the elderly, those with an existing medical conditions and pregnant women.

As raw chicken is the primary vehicle for infections, preparing food safely in the home is critical in stopping campylobacter infections.

In June 2020 to coincide with the inaugural World Food Safety Day (7 June), **safefood** ran an awareness campaign to remind people of a key food safety message – never wash raw chicken. The campaign comprised:

- Video on Demand (VOD) advertising
- Point of sale advertising on supermarket shopping trolley handles
- Poster advertising in the vicinity of major supermarket locations
- Digital advertising online
- Social media channel advertising
- Press release and photocall



32,992 page views on the web which accounted for 10.5% of total traffic for the campaign period.



BBQ

safefood shared food safety advice from the experts and enlisted the help of celebrity chef Donal Skehan to inspire home cooks that the best burgers are well done. With Public Health advice encouraging people to spend time outdoors due to Covid-19, sales of barbeque meats and barbeque-related products increased. **safefood** was on hand to remind people to make sure they cooked their burgers well done and avoid any food safety mishaps, which could lead to people getting sick.

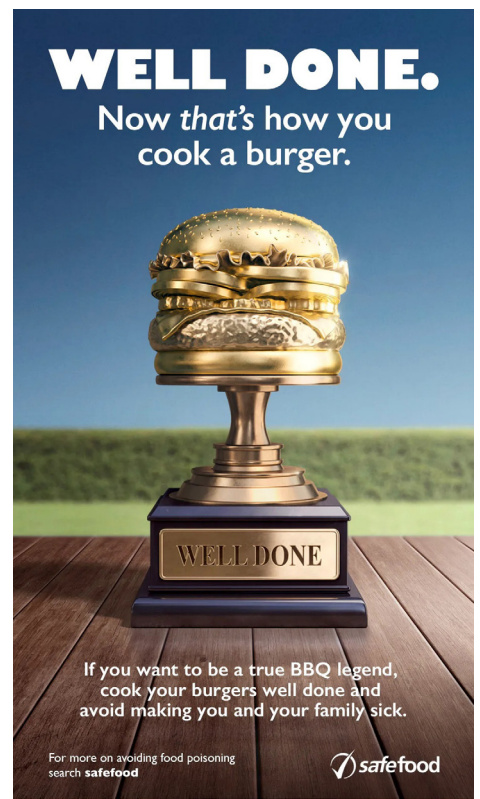
The summer food safety campaign titled ‘well done’ appeared on digital outdoor and social media channels in phases throughout May to July. The campaign used new technology in digital outdoor advertising. Campaign advertising was activated when the ambient temperature exceeded 18 Degrees and includes the line ‘It’s a hot one’. The aim of this was to further engage supermarket shoppers on days when barbeques might be more likely.

The campaign generated the following



49 pieces of media coverage
33 print and online format and approximately **52** minutes of radio and TV interviews.

12,957 page views to the web campaign page. The top source of traffic was Direct with 5,863 page views. In addition, a press release was issued on the website accounting for 38 page views and 17,823 page views of the BBQ page in the food safety section promoting the press release.



Corporate Operations



The services provided span the areas of accounting and finance, procurement, human resources, information technology, legal, governance, audit and data protection all contributing to facilitate the efficient and effective delivery of **safefood's** business goals and strategy.

Advisory Board

Six meetings of the Advisory Board were held through the year, one Dublin, the remainder taking place online due to Covid-19 restrictions. The meeting scheduled for March was cancelled in order to give **safefood** and Board members the opportunity to adapt to working remotely and put the necessary supports in place. Attendance details, as well as fees paid to members of the Advisory Board are included on page 39. One member retired and two new members were appointed by the North South Ministerial Council in 2020.

Helen O'Donnell	6
Alex Attwood (appointed 16 December 2020)	n/a
Teresa Canavan (appointed 16 December 2020)	n/a
Maeve Henchion (appointed 3 October 2020)	1
Brendan Kehoe	6
Sinead McCarthy (appointed 3 October 2020)	2
Alan McGrath	6
Wendy McIntosh	6
Stephen Moutray	5
Mervyn Oswald (retired December 2020)	5
Eddie Rooney	6
Mary Upton	5

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit & Risk Committee is comprised of two members of the Advisory Board and two external members, one of whom chairs the committee. Both external members of the committee have wide relevant professional experience. During 2020, the Audit & Risk Committee held four virtual meetings.

The Audit & Risk Committee engages external professional auditors to conduct a programme of internal audits and reviews the risk register at each meeting for completeness and to ensure that all appropriate steps to control and mitigate risks are in place. **safefood's** External Audit is carried out jointly by the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Northern Ireland Audit Office. The Audit & Risk Committee has an independent role in the provision of assurance to the CEO as accounting officer and the Advisory Board on internal control, risk management, and audit and assurance matters as part of the systematic review of **safefood's** internal controls and governance procedures.

Audit & Risk Committee membership and attendance for 2020

Number of meetings	4
Mr Alan Myles (Chairperson)	4
Mr Alan McGrath	4
Dr Eddie Rooney	4
Ms Mairead Ní Cheadagain	4

Human Rights & Equality

safefood is required to comply with Equality and Human Rights legislation in both jurisdictions. During 2020, **safefood** closely monitored its progress towards delivering the commitments set out in its Disability Action Plan 2016-2020. Regular training is provided to all staff to encourage awareness of disability and equality issues and this training is incorporated into the staff induction process. The Annual Report on Equality (which is published on **safefood's** website) and the Disability Action Plan were submitted on a timely basis to the Equality Commission (NI). **safefood's** recruitment programme actively encourages people with disabilities to apply for roles.

Advisory Committee

safefood is assisted by an Advisory Committee of experts with a broad range of professional expertise, experience and backgrounds in the areas of Food Science, Diet and Health, Food Industry, Communications and Behaviour change, and State and Regulatory. Membership of the Committee is voluntary and the overarching role of the members is the provision of technical advice and guidance to assist **safefood** in successfully delivering on the elements of its three-year Corporate and Annual Business Plans. The Advisory Committee complements **safefood's** Advisory Board and both structures are appointed by the North South Ministerial Council.

All outgoing members of the Committee retired on the 9th of November 2019 in line with their terms of appointment. Twelve individuals were appointed as members of **safefood's** Advisory Committee by the North South Ministerial Council on the 2nd October 2020. The members are: -

- Prof Elizabeth Keane (Former member, re-appointed)
- Prof Mary Corcoran (Former member, re-appointed)
- Prof Mary Brennan
- Ms Anne Marie Crowley
- Ms Mary Daly
- Dr Nazih Eldin
- Dr Rhodri Evans
- Ms Claire MacEvilly
- Prof Eileen Gibney
- Prof Frank Monahan
- Dr Muiris O'Ceidigh
- Dr Martin Rose

Prof Elizabeth Keane was appointed as chair.

During November and December 2020, **safefood** completed a series of individual induction meetings with the new members.

Protected Disclosure

Section 22 of the Protected Disclosure Act 2014 requires the publication of a report each year relating to the number of protected disclosures made in the preceding year and also for the publication of information with regard to any actions taken in response to protected disclosures made.

There were no protected disclosures were received by **safefood** in the reporting period up to 31 December 2020.

Business Plan 2021

The Business Plan was submitted to both sponsor departments in 2020.

Declaration of interests

Members of the Advisory Board complete a Declaration of Interests annually. A Register of Interests is maintained and is available on request.

safefood engagements with key stakeholders

safefood participated in the Department of Health's Covid-19 Behaviour Change Working Group and two members of **safefood's** staff provided temporary assistance to the Health Services Executive's Public Health Team in Ireland during 2020. **safefood** also assisted the Public Health Agency's Covid-19 Behaviour Change Group in Northern Ireland. In October, the CEO and Chair of the Advisory Board attended the Health & Food Safety Sectoral meeting of the North South Ministerial Council (virtually).

Remuneration Report

For the year ended 31 December 2020

The North/South Implementation Bodies Annual Reports and Accounts Guidance, issued jointly by the Department of Finance (DOF) in the North and the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform (DPER) in the South, requires the disclosure of the remuneration and pension entitlements of certain senior staff members. Based on the Board's assessment that making those disclosures would be a breach of data protection legislation, **safefood** has not made those disclosures.

Remuneration Policy

safefood's remuneration policy is to mirror the Public Sector salaries and terms and conditions for all staff. The appropriate pay scales for each grade contain a number of pay points from minima to maxima, allowing progression towards the maxima.

Salary Bands

The number of employees at the end of the year whose emoluments (including pension contributions) fell within the following bands (this represents the annual emoluments) are:-

	2020	2019
€20,000 – €30,000	4	3
€30,001 – €40,000	5	5
€40,001 – €50,000	3	3
€50,001 – €60,000	8	8
€60,001 – €70,000	3	3
€70,001 – €80,000	1	3
€80,001 – €90,000	3	2
€90,001 – €100,000	2	1
€100,001 – €110,000	0	2
€110,001 – €120,000	3	1

Bonuses and Benefits in Kind

It is not the policy of **safefood** to make any bonus payments to members of the key management team or staff. No bonus payments were made in 2020 or 2019.

In 2019 in recognition of the 20 year anniversary of **safefood** a voucher in the amount of €250 was awarded to 28 permanent members of staff. There were no other benefits in kind provided to key management or staff in 2020 or 2019.

Service Contracts

All senior management and key appointments are made in accordance with **safefood's** recruitment policy which requires the appointment to be on the basis of suitability and competence. All staff receive a contract of employment on appointment, which details their terms and conditions. Termination payments are in accordance with these terms and conditions. During 2020 there were no termination, compensation or severance payments made.

Key Management Team Remuneration

The remuneration and pension entitlements of the Chief Executive Officer are set out in note 3 (c) of the Financial Statements.

The Key Management Team consists of the Chief Executive Officer, the Director of Corporate Operations, the Director of Marketing and Communications, the Director of Food Science and the Director of Human Health and Nutrition. The total remuneration paid to the Key Management Team in 2020 amounted to €513,049 (GBP£456,460), 2019 €446,727 (GBP£392,124).

Pension Arrangements

All staff and management are members of the North/South Pension Scheme which was established by the North/South Implementation Bodies and Tourism Ireland Limited with effect from 29 April 2005. It is a defined benefit pension scheme which is funded annually on a pay as you go basis from monies provided by the UK and Irish Exchequers. Funding is provided to the Body by the Department of Health in the South and the Department of Health in the North. The scheme is administered by an external administrator.

Fair Pay Disclosure

safefood is required to disclose the median remuneration of its staff. This is based on annualised full time equivalent remuneration of all staff as at 31st December 2020. It is also required to disclose the range of staff remuneration and the ratio between the median staff remuneration and the mid-point of the banded remuneration of the highest paid director.

	2020 €	2019 €	2020 GBP£	2019 GBP£
Midpoint of band of highest paid director	115,653	113,998	102,896	£100,064
Median remuneration of staff	57,261	54,730	50,945	48,040
Ratio	2.02	2.08	2.02	2.08
Range of staff remuneration	€25,499 to €115,653	€24,875 to €113,998	£22,687 to £102,896	£21,836 to £100,064

The remuneration of the highest paid director in 2020 was €115,653 (GBP£102,896), 2019: €113,998 (GBP£100,064). This was 2.02, 2019:2.08 times the median salary of the workforce which in 2020 was €57,261 (GBP£50,945), 2019: €54,730 (GBP£48,040).

Total remuneration includes salary. It does not include employer pension contribution and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

Advisory Board Fees

	2020 €	2019 €	2020 GBP£	2019 GBP£	2020 Meetings Attended	2019 Meetings Attended
Helen O'Donnell	11,970	11,970	10,650	10,507	6	6
Brendan Kehoe	7,695	7,695	6,846	6,754	6	7
Alan McGrath	7,695	7,695	6,846	6,754	6	5
Mary Upton	7,695	7,695	6,846	6,754	5	6
Mervyn Oswald	5,583	5,964	4,968	5,235	5	6
Margaret Jeffares	-	7,302	-	6,409	-	6
Edmond Rooney	5,884	5,964	5,235	5,235	6	7
Wendy McIntosh	5,884	5,964	5,235	5,235	6	7
Stephen Moutray	5,884	5,964	5,235	5,235	5	4
Meave Henchion	-	-	-	-	1	-
Sinead McCarthy	-	-	-	-	2	-

6 meetings of the Advisory Board were held in 2020 (2019: 7). The total amount of fees paid to Advisory Board members in 2020 was €58,787.73/GBP£52,303 (2019 €66,277/GBP£58,176) and the National Insurance Contribution in 2020 was €0/£0 (2019 €0/£0). The total amount of fees due at 31st December 2020 was €501 accrued for Ms Teresa Canavan and Mr Alex Attwood, who were appointed to the Advisory Board on 16th December 2020. There were no amounts due at 31st December 2019. No Benefits in Kind were provided to Senior Management or Advisory Board Members. A total of €1,576/GBP£1,402 (2019 €9,292/GBP£8,156) was claimed by Advisory Board Members to cover travel and subsistence expenses. This amount is included in travel and subsistence disclosed in note 4.

2020 Accounts



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Foreword to the Accounts

1. Format

These Accounts are prepared in a form directed by the Department of Health (Northern Ireland) and the Department of Health (Ireland) with the approval of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Ireland) and the Department of Finance (Northern Ireland), and in accordance with the financial arrangements of Part 7 of Annex 2 to the British-Irish Agreement Act 1999 and the North-South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order 1999.

2. Background Information

The Food Safety Promotion Board (An Bord um Chur Chun Cinn Sábháilteachta Bia) is an Implementation Body established under the Belfast Agreement on the 2nd December 1999. The Board's governing legislation is 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:-

- Promotion of food safety
- Research into food safety
- Communication of food alerts
- Surveillance of foodborne disease
- Promotion of scientific co-operation and laboratory linkages
- Development of cost effective facilities for specialised laboratory testing

In addition to the above, the Board has a general remit to act as an independent source of scientific advice.

The Food Safety Promotion Board operates under the brand name '**safefood**'.

3. Governance

The functions of the Board are discharged by the Chief Executive who reports to the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC). The Chief Executive is assisted by an Advisory Board and a Scientific Advisory Committee. The members of the Advisory Board for 2020 were:

Advisory Board 2020

Ms. Helen O Donnell
(Chairperson)

Mr. Brendan Kehoe

Mr. Alan McGrath

Dr. Mary Upton

Mr. Mervyn Oswald
(Retired 12th December)

Dr. Edmond Rooney

Ms. Wendy McIntosh

Mr. Stephen Moutray

Prof. Meave Henchion
(Appointed 3rd October)

Dr. Sinead McCarthy
(Appointed 3rd October)

Ms. Teresa Canavan
(Appointed 16th December)

Mr. Alex Attwood
(Appointed 16th December)

One member of the Advisory Board retired during 2020, in line with their terms of office. Under the British-Irish Agreement Act, 1999, the NSMC appointed four new members to the Advisory Board.

Advisory Committee 2020

The **safefood** Advisory Committee comprises 12 members drawn from a broad range of expertise and disciplines available in both jurisdictions and advises on food sciences, the agri-food chain, public health nutrition, education, consumer behaviour, communications and community and voluntary matters.

In 2020 under the British-Irish Agreement Act, 1999, the NSMC appointed the new Advisory Committee (2 returning members and 10 new members).

4. Financial Results

The results of the Food Safety Promotion Board are set out in detail on page 48. During 2020, the Food Safety Promotion Board incurred expenditure of €8,066,182 (£7,176,482) and received income of €8,691,508 (£7,732,835) resulting in a surplus for the year of €625,326 (£556,353). Comparatively, during 2019, the Food Safety Promotion Board incurred expenditure of €8,443,181 (GBP£7,411,699) and received income of €8,633,549 (GBP£7,578,798) resulting in a surplus for that year of €190,368 (GBP£167,099).

5. Post Balance Sheet Events

There were no events between the reporting date and the date of approval of these financial statements for issue that require adjustment to the financial statements.

The Board recognises that the Covid-19 pandemic is a significant and ongoing event. The Board is taking the situation seriously and is monitoring the situation on an ongoing basis. The business continues to operate with measures in place to protect staff and **safefood's** stakeholders. The majority of staff are working remotely and operations and activities are being maintained while adjusting to the different way in which the business is being delivered.

6. Charitable Donations

No charitable donations were received or made during the year.

7. Policies

Disabled Employees

The Board complies with the requirements of Part 5 of the Disabilities Act 2005 in supporting the employment of people with disabilities and continues to be committed to a policy of equal opportunity and welcomes applications from suitably qualified applicants irrespective of disability. Our disability action plan was issued in 2011 and updated in 2016 to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage their participation in public life. This is due to be updated again in 2021.

Equality

The Board's approved Equality Scheme was issued in September 2011 and **safefood** is engaged in an ongoing review process.

Provision of Information to and Consulting with Employees

An Employee Partnership Forum was in place throughout 2020 as a mechanism for consultation with employees.

Prompt Payment Policy and its performance

The Board is committed to the prompt payments for goods and services received, in accordance with the Irish Prompt Payments of Accounts Act, 1997 as amended by the European Communities (Late Payments in Commercial Transactions) Regulations 2013 and the UK Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, as amended by the Late Payment of Commercial Debts Regulations 2002. Unless otherwise stated in the contract, payment is due within 30 days of receipt of the goods or services, or on presentation of a valid invoice or similar demand whichever is later. In 2020 99% (2019 99%) of all invoices were settled within 30 days.

Health & Safety Policy

The Board maintains a Health and Safety policy, circulated to all employees. The policy reflects legal requirements to maintain a high standard throughout the organisation.

8. Future Development

The Board's Corporate Strategy for the years 2020 – 2022 has been developed and is currently awaiting approval. The FSPB Business Plan for 2020 was not approved by the North / South Ministerial Council, as this body was not operational during 2020. However, the funding departments put in place alternative arrangements to enable **safefood** to continue in operation.

This Strategy outlines the Board's mission, vision and core values and how the Board will implement each of its functions over the 3 year period. The strategy is re-assessed annually in the context of an annual business plan.

The budgeted expenditure for 2021 is €7,480,000 (£6,507,600).

The decision by the United Kingdom to leave the European Union poses a threat to the operation of **safefood**. It is as yet unclear as to what the final extent of this impact may be.

Statement of Food Safety Promotion Board's and Accountable Person's Responsibilities


The Department of Health (I) and the Department of Health (NI) have directed the Food Safety Promotion Board to prepare a statement of accounts for each financial year ended 31 December in the form and on the basis set out in the accounts direction at the appendix to these Accounts. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the Body's state of affairs at the year-end and of its income and expenditure, changes in equity, and cash flows for the calendar year.

In preparing the accounts the Body is required to:

- Observe the accounts direction issued by the Department of Health (I) and the Department of Health (NI), including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- Make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed and disclose and explain any material departures in the accounts;
- Prepare the Accounts on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Body will continue in operation.

Chief Executive's Responsibilities

The Chief Executive's responsibilities as the Accountable Person for the Food Safety Promotion Board, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances and for the keeping of records, are set out in the Financial Memorandum of the Body.



Raymond Dolan

Chief Executive Officer

Date: 14/10/2021

Statement on Internal Control / Governance Statement

1. Scope of Responsibility

As Accountable Person, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the Food Safety Promotion Board's policies, aims and objectives, while safeguarding the public funds and Departmental assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland (MPMNI) and Public Finance Procedures.

The precise accountability and reporting structure is defined in the Board's Financial Memorandum, which outlines the review and monitoring role of the joint sponsor Departments (Department of Health (NI) and Department of Health (I)). In addition, as Chief Executive Officer, I am accountable to the respective public accounts committees in both jurisdictions.

2. The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims, and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Board policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively, and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in The Food Safety Promotion Board for the year ended 31 December 2020 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Accounts, and accords with the Finance Departments' guidance.

3. Capacity to Handle Risk

The Senior Management Team is responsible for applying and overseeing the risk management process under my guidance to ensure the process is working as intended. In addition to reviewing the overall risk framework, all recommendations received from both the internal and external auditors are reviewed, with controls being enhanced or introduced as necessary.

All staff are expected to work within established policies on risk and internal control, and are trained appropriately.

4. The Risk and Control Framework

The Board has developed a risk register and risk assessment matrix. Risk is identified at both the inherent and control level at the time of the development of business plans and strategies. The Board has developed a framework of regular management information, variance review, and administrative and control procedures (including the segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability).

It also includes:

- Comprehensive Budgeting systems with the annual budget approved by the Chief Executive Officer;
- Procedures to review and agree the Budgets with the Senior Management Team;
- The preparation of regular financial reports as a basis for reviewing and monitoring progress.

In 2020, the review of the risk and control framework was aided by the comments of both the Internal and External Auditors and the Audit and Risk Committee.

5. Review of Effectiveness

As accountable person, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the internal auditors and the executive managers who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework, and comments made by the external auditors in their management letter and other reports. A plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

The following activities supported the effectiveness review:

- The Annual Budget, approved by the Sponsoring Departments, was reviewed monthly by the Senior Management Team, particularly any variances from planned activity;
- The framework for risk management was kept under continuing review and the risk register was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee.

A review of the effectiveness of Internal Financial Controls in place during the 2020 financial year was undertaken in November 2020 by the Internal Auditors and reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee. On the basis of their report, I am assured that overall strong systems and controls are in place to mitigate key identified risks. The audit report found that design and operation of key internal controls is satisfactory and found substantial compliance with established systems and internal financial controls. The conclusion was that significant assurance can be placed on the sufficiency and operation of **safefood's** internal control framework. No high risk findings that may result in a material financial loss or operational disruption were discovered and apart from five issues, deemed of low

weakness, it was found that the controls tested were operating effectively during the year ended 31 December 2020. In light of the Covid 19 pandemic the Audit and Risk Committee requested a review of the Business Continuity Plan in **safefood**. The objective of the review was to provide the ARC with an opinion on the level of assurance they may place on the design and operation of systems, process and controls for mitigating the risks associated with business continuity planning. The audit concluded process and controls in place in respect of Business Continuity provide reasonable assurance that risks are adequately managed and mitigated. Recommendations were made to address some low risk findings and implementation of these has commenced. The current Covid-19 pandemic has shown that **safefood** has a competent, flexible and adaptable management team that have demonstrated an ability to adapt to changing circumstances, a robust system for back-up of data and a clear command structure all of which lent to the uninterrupted continuation of service when the Covid-19 pandemic hit in early 2020.



Raymond Dolan
Chief Executive Officer
Date: 14/10/2021

Food Safety Promotion Board

The certificate of the comptrollers and auditors general to the Northern Ireland assembly and houses of the oireachtas.

Opinion on the accounts

We certify that we have audited the accounts of the Food Safety Promotion Board (the Body) for the year ended 31 December 2020 pursuant to the provisions of the North/South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 and the British/Irish Agreement Act 1999 which require us to audit and certify, in co-operation, the accounts presented to us by the Body. The accounts comprise:

- the statement of income and expenditure;
- the statement of comprehensive income;
- the statement of financial position;
- the statement of cash flows;
- the statement of changes in equity; and
- the related notes, including significant accounting policies.

These accounts have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them.

In our opinion, the accounts:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Body's affairs as at 31 December 2020 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the accounts direction in the appendix to the accounts.

Opinion on regularity

In our opinion, the expenditure and income recorded in the accounts have in all material respects been applied to the purposes intended by the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Houses of the Oireachtas and the financial transactions reported in the accounts conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis of opinions

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'responsibilities of the auditors' section of this certificate. We are independent of the Body in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2016 and of the Code

of Ethics issued by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions and have fulfilled our ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinions.

Information other than the accounts

The Body has presented certain other information together with the accounts. This comprises the annual report, the foreword to the accounts, the statement on the system of internal control/governance statement and the remuneration report. Our opinion on the accounts does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the accounts, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the accounts or our knowledge obtained during the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which we report if, in our opinion:

- we have not received all the information and explanations we required for our audit, or
- the accounting records were not sufficient to permit the accounts to be readily and properly audited, or
- the accounts are not in agreement with the accounting records, or
- the statement on the system of internal control/governance statement does not reflect compliance with applicable guidance on corporate governance.

Responsibilities of the Body and the Accounting Officer for the accounts As explained more fully in the statement of responsibilities, the Body is responsible for the preparation of the accounts on the basis of the accounts direction included in the appendix to the accounts and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. The Chief Executive, as Accounting Officer, is responsible for the propriety and regularity in relation to the use of public funds.

Responsibilities of the auditors

Our responsibility is to audit the accounts in accordance with the provisions of the North/South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 and the British-Irish Agreement Act 1999 and to report thereon to the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Houses of the Oireachtas.

Our objective in carrying out the audit is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the accounts as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these accounts.

As part of an audit in accordance with the ISAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. In doing so

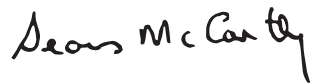
- We identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the accounts whether due to fraud or error; design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks; and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- We obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal controls.
- We evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures.
- We conclude on the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, on whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Body's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our report to the related disclosures in the accounts or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the

audit evidence obtained up to the date of our report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Body to cease to continue as a going concern.

- We evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the accounts, including the disclosures, and whether the accounts represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

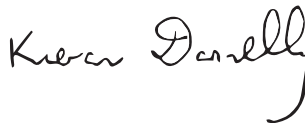
We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

In addition, we are required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that expenditure and income recorded in the financial accounts have been applied to the purposes intended by the Northern Ireland Assembly and Houses of the Oireachtas and that the financial transactions recorded in the accounts conform to the authorities which govern them.



Seamus McCarthy

Comptroller and Auditor General, Ireland
3A Mayor Street Upper
Dublin 1, Ireland, DO1 PF72
20 October 2021



Kieran J Donnelly

Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast, BT7 1EU
20 October 2021

Statement of income and expenditure

for the year ended 31 December 2020

	Notes	2020 €	2019 €	2020 £	2019 £
Income					
Revenue Grant from Departments	2(a)	7,535,759	7,746,826	6,704,565	6,799,931
Capital Grant Release	9	<u>124,749</u>	<u>129,723</u>	<u>110,989</u>	<u>113,867</u>
		7,660,508	7,876,549	6,815,554	6,913,798
Other Income	2(b)	<u>1,031,000</u>	<u>757,000</u>	<u>917,281</u>	<u>665,000</u>
Total Income		8,691,508	8,633,549	7,732,835	7,578,798
Expenditure					
Staff Costs	3(b)	3,177,770	2,910,063	2,827,262	2,554,894
Board Fees		58,788	66,277	52,304	58,176
Depreciation	6	124,749	129,723	110,989	113,867
Research Programme Expenditure	5	1,164,061	971,209	1,035,665	852,498
Promotion Activities	12	2,330,250	3,057,536	2,073,223	2,683,813
Other Operating Costs	4	<u>1,210,564</u>	<u>1,308,373</u>	<u>1,077,039</u>	<u>1,148,451</u>
Total Expenditure		8,066,182	8,443,181	7,176,482	7,411,699
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		625,326	190,368	556,353	167,099
Amount transferred to General Reserve	13	<u>625,326</u>	<u>190,368</u>	<u>556,353</u>	<u>167,099</u>

All amounts above relate to continuing activities.

The notes on pages 53 to 69 form part of these accounts, together with Appendix 1 on page 70.



Raymond Dolan

Chief Executive Officer

Date: 14/10/2021

Statement of comprehensive income

for the year ended 31 December 2020

	Notes	2020 €	2019 €	2020 £	2019 £
Surplus/(Deficit) for the period		625,326	190,368	556,353	167,099
Actuarial gain/(loss) on pension liabilities	17(b)	(2,582,000)	(2,316,000)	(2,297,205)	(2,033,000)
Adjustment to deferred pension funding		<u>2,582,000</u>	<u>2,316,000</u>	<u>2,297,205</u>	<u>2,033,000</u>
Total recognised gain/(loss) for the period		<u>625,326</u>	<u>190,368</u>	<u>556,353</u>	<u>167,099</u>

The notes on pages 53 to 69 form part of these accounts, together with Appendix 1 on page 70.



Raymond Dolan

Chief Executive Officer

Date: 14/10/2021

Statement of financial position

for the year ended 31 December 2020

	Notes	2020 €	2019 €	2020 £	2019 £
Fixed Assets					
Tangible Assets	6	562,393	616,651	505,608	524,647
Current Assets					
Receivables	7	233,066	255,813	209,533	217,646
Cash and cash equivalents		1,457,761	800,036	1,310,571	680,671
Current Liabilities					
Payables- amount falling due within one year	8	(521,076)	(511,424)	(468,463)	(435,120)
Net Current Assets		<u>1,169,751</u>	<u>544,425</u>	<u>1,051,641</u>	<u>463,197</u>
Total Assets less Current Liabilities before Pensions		<u>1,732,144</u>	<u>1,161,076</u>	<u>1,557,249</u>	<u>987,844</u>
Deferred Pension Funding	17(d)	19,838,000	16,225,000	17,834,957	13,804,000
Pension Liabilities	17(b)	(19,838,000)	(16,225,000)	(17,834,957)	(13,804,000)
Net Assets		<u>1,732,144</u>	<u>1,161,076</u>	<u>1,557,249</u>	<u>987,844</u>
Financed By:					
Capital & Reserves					
General Reserve	13	1,169,751	544,425	1,051,641	463,197
Capital Grant Reserve	9	562,393	616,651	505,608	524,647
		<u>1,732,144</u>	<u>1,161,076</u>	<u>1,557,249</u>	<u>987,844</u>

The notes on pages 53 to 69 form part of these accounts, together with Appendix 1 on page 70.

Raymond Dolan

Chief Executive Officer

Date: 14/10/2021

Statement of cash flows

for the year ended 31 December 2020

	Notes	2020 €	2019 €	2020 £	2019 £
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities	10	657,725	201,133	629,900	144,934
Capital expenditure & financial investment					
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets	6	(70,491)	(27,520)	(62,716)	(24,156)
Net cash inflow/(outflow) before financing		587,234	173,613	567,184	120,778
Financing					
Capital Funding Received		70,491	27,520	62,716	24,156
Increase/(decrease) in cash/bank balances	11	657,725	201,133	629,900	144,934
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		800,036	598,903	680,671	535,737
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		1,457,761	800,036	1,310,571	680,671

The notes on pages 53 to 69 form part of these accounts, together with Appendix 1 on page 70.



Raymond Dolan

Chief Executive Officer

Date: 14/10/2021

Statement of changes in equity

for the year ended 31 December 2020

	Notes	2020 €	2019 €	2020 £	2019 £
General Reserve					
Balance at 1 January	13	544,425	354,057	463,197	316,715
Surplus/(Deficit)	13	625,326	190,368	556,353	167,099
Actuarial Gain / (Loss)	17 (b)	(2,582,000)	(2,316,000)	(2,297,205)	(2,033,000)
Deferred Pension Funding		2,582,000	2,316,000	2,297,205	2,033,000
Currency Translation Adjustment	13			32,091	(20,617)
Balance at 31 December		<u>1,169,751</u>	<u>544,425</u>	<u>1,051,641</u>	<u>463,197</u>
Capital Reserve					
Balance at 1 January	9	616,651	718,854	524,647	643,036
Capital Grants	9	70,491	27,520	62,716	24,156
Amortisation	9	(124,749)	(129,723)	(110,989)	(113,867)
Currency Translation Adjustment	9			29,234	(28,678)
Balance at 31 December		<u>562,393</u>	<u>616,651</u>	<u>505,608</u>	<u>524,647</u>
Total Equity at Year End		<u>1,732,144</u>	<u>1,161,076</u>	<u>1,557,249</u>	<u>987,844</u>

The notes on pages 53 to 69 form part of these accounts, together with Appendix 1 on page 70.



Raymond Dolan

Chief Executive Officer

Date: 14/10/2021

Notes to the Accounts

1. Accounting Policies

1.1 Accounting Convention

The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention.

Without limiting the information given, the Financial Statements are prepared on an accruals basis and comply with the accounting and disclosure requirements issued by the Department of Finance and Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

1.2 Income

Income represents revenue grants receivable from the Department of Health (I) and the Department of Health (NI).

1.3 Fixed Assets

a) Tangible Fixed assets are included at historic cost to the Food Safety Promotion Board.

b) Depreciation is calculated to write off the cost over their useful lives.

The methods adopted and the rates used per annum are as follows:

Office Equipment	15% Straight Line
Computer Equipment	33.3% Straight Line
Property & Fitout Costs	4% Straight Line
Fixtures & Fittings	10% Straight Line

c) Depreciation is charged in the year of acquisition but not in the year of disposal.

d) Fixed Assets are capitalised once they exceed €650 (£578).

1.4 Value Added Tax

The Food Safety Promotion Board is not in a position to reclaim VAT and VAT is included as expenditure or in the capital value of Fixed Assets.

1.5 Retirement Benefits

The Food Safety Promotion Board has adopted FRS 102 in relation to accounting for retirement benefits.

The North/South Pension Scheme was established by the North/South Implementation Bodies and Tourism Ireland Limited with effect from 29 April 2005. It is a defined benefit pension scheme which is funded

annually on a pay as you go basis from monies provided by the UK and Irish Exchequers. The scheme is administered by an external administrator.

Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 covers retirement benefits. The liability at 31 December 2020 has been included in the financial statements and a disclosure note has been included (Note 17) detailing the actuarial review calculations, which were carried out by Deloitte Total Reward and Benefits Limited using the projected unit method. This includes the results of the calculations of the pension liabilities and costs of employees (and ex-employees) of the Food Safety Promotion Board for the purposes of the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020 and comparative figures for 2019.

Retirement Benefit costs reflect retirement benefits earned by employees in the period. An amount corresponding to the retirement benefit charge is recognised as income to the extent that it is recoverable, and offset by grants received in the year to discharge retirement benefit payments. Retirement Benefit liabilities represent the present value of future retirement benefit payments earned by staff to date. Deferred retirement benefit funding represents a corresponding asset, being resources to be made available in future periods from the UK and Irish Exchequers in the manner described above.

Actuarial gains and losses arising from changes in actuarial assumptions and from experience surpluses and deficits are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income. From 2012, the current retirement benefit service cost is recognised gross of members' contributions. Treatment in prior years had been to recognise the members' contributions separately within the retirement benefits note.

1.6 Research Programme Expenditure

Research Contract costs included in the Income and Expenditure Account are based on expenditure due and payable in the year on foot of approved research contracts.

1.7 Capital Grant Reserve

The Capital Grant Reserve Account represents the unamortised value of income used for capital purposes.

1.8 Reporting Currency

The transactions and balances of the Board are reported in both Euro and Sterling. The working

currency of the Board is Euro and transactions are recorded in that currency. Transactions in other currencies are recorded in euro at the exchange rate ruling at the date of the transactions and sourced from ECB Reference Rates. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in Sterling are translated into Euro at the rates of exchange prevailing at the Balance Sheet date (0.89903). Realised gains and losses are taken to the Income and Expenditure Account.

At year-end the financial statements are translated into Sterling. The Income and Expenditure Account is translated using the average exchange rate for the year (2020 – 0.88970, 2019 - 0.87777) while the Balance Sheet is translated using the closing exchange rate (2020 – 0.89903, 2019 – 0.85080). Currency adjustments arising from this translation of the financial statements are reflected in Net Cash Flow from Operating Activities (Note 10), Capital Grant Reserve (Note 9), and General Reserve (Note 13).

1.9 Statement of Compliance

The financial statements of **safefood** for the year ended 31 December 2020 have been prepared in accordance with FRS102, the financial reporting standards applicable in the UK and Ireland issued by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), as promulgated by Chartered Accountants Ireland and, except where indicated, are in compliance with the requirements of the North/South Implementation Bodies Annual Reports and Accounts Guidance issued by the Department of Finance (NI) and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (I).

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

2. a) Grants from the Departments

Financial Period 1st January, 2020 to 31st December, 2020

	Note	DOH (I) €	DOH(NI) €	TOTAL €	DOH (I) £	DOH(NI) £	TOTAL £
Revenue Grant		5,291,725	2,244,034	7,535,759	4,708,048	1,996,517	6,704,565
Capital Account	9	<u>49,500</u>	<u>20,991</u>	<u>70,491</u>	<u>44,040</u>	<u>18,676</u>	<u>62,716</u>
		<u>5,341,225</u>	<u>2,265,025</u>	<u>7,606,250</u>	<u>4,752,088</u>	<u>2,015,193</u>	<u>6,767,281</u>

Financial Period 1st January, 2019 to 31st December, 2019

	Note	DOH (I) €	DOH(NI) €	TOTAL €	DOH (I) £	DOH(NI) £	TOTAL £
Revenue Grant		5,362,840	2,383,986	7,746,826	4,707,340	2,092,591	6,799,931
Capital Account	9	<u>18,989</u>	<u>8,531</u>	<u>27,520</u>	<u>16,668</u>	<u>7,488</u>	<u>24,156</u>
		<u>5,381,829</u>	<u>2,392,517</u>	<u>7,774,346</u>	<u>4,724,008</u>	<u>2,100,079</u>	<u>6,824,087</u>

The Food Safety Promotion Board receives grants from the Department of Health (DOH (I)) and the Department of Health (DOH (NI)). The respective contributions are DOH (I) 70% (2019 69%), and DOH (NI) 30% (2019 31%).

The grants awarded are recorded at a business plan exchange rate for budgeting purposes and at the actual application date exchange rate for the financial statements. In 2020 the budget was €7,480,000 (2019 €7,480,000) excluding pensions and €7,607,184 (2019 €7,665,698) including pensions based on an exchange rate of €1 to £0.90 (2019 €1 to £0.90). The average exchange rate over the period was €1 to £0.88970 (2019 €1 to £0.87777), as a result the grant recognised including pensions was €7,606,250 (2019 €7,774,346) - a foreign exchange loss on grant conversion of €934 (2019 gain of €108,648).

2. b) Other Income

	Note	2020 €	2019 €	2020 £	2019 £
Net deferred funding for pensions		<u>1,031,000</u>	<u>757,000</u>	<u>917,281</u>	<u>665,000</u>
	17 (c)	<u>1,031,000</u>	<u>757,000</u>	<u>917,281</u>	<u>665,000</u>

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

3. Staff Costs

a) The average number of staff (including agency staff) was:

Directorates	2020	2019
Senior Management	5	5
Corporate Operations	9	9
Food Science	5	5
Human Health & Nutrition	5	4
Marketing & Communications	7	8
Total	31	31

b) The costs incurred in respect of these staff were:

	2020 €	2019 €	2020 £	2019 £
Salary Costs	1,826,384	1,772,905	1,624,934	1,556,203
Employer PRSI	185,492	167,713	165,032	147,213
Agency Staff	7,710	26,747	6,859	23,478
Pension Costs:	<u>1,158,184</u>	<u>942,698</u>	<u>1,030,437</u>	<u>828,000</u>
Current Pension Service Costs	<u>3,177,770</u>	<u>2,910,063</u>	<u>2,827,262</u>	<u>2,554,894</u>

During the year, €42,396/£37,720 (2019 €45,332/£39,791) of additional superannuation contributions, under Part 4 of the Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017, were deducted and paid over to the Department of Health.

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

c) The following information is provided in respect of the Senior Management Team:-

	Emoluments	Emoluments	Real Increase/ (Decrease) in Pension Earned	Real Increase/ (Decrease) in Pension Earned	Value of Accrued Pension at year-end	Value of Accrued Pension at year-end	Age (years)
	€	£	€	£	€	£	
Mr Ray Dolan (CEO)	115,652	102,896	0 – 2,500	0 – 2,224	55,000-57,500	49,447 – 51,694	65

The North/South Implementation Bodies Annual Reports and Accounts Guidance, requires the disclosure of the remuneration and pension entitlements of certain senior staff members. In view of Data Protection legislation, the Board has not made these disclosures as this could result in a data protection breach. Dr Gary Kearney (Director, Food Science), Dr Catherine Conlon (Director, Human Health and Nutrition), Ms Patricia Fitzgerald (Director, Corporate Operations) and Dr Aileen McGloin (Director, Marketing and Communications) withheld consent to disclose the above information. All emoluments are in line with standard public sector emoluments for their grades. The total remuneration paid to the key management team in 2020 amounted to €513,049/£456,460 (2019 €446,727/£392,124).

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

4. Other Operating Costs

	2020	2019	2020	2019
	€	€	£	£
Rent & Electricity*	576,167	601,031	512,616	527,567
Printing, Reports & Literature	6,887	9,645	6,127	8,466
Travel & Subsistence**	38,939	191,259	34,644	167,881
Computer Support	192,383	106,835	171,163	93,777
Telephone	42,299	41,512	37,633	36,438
Postage & Stationery	16,584	18,368	14,755	16,123
Meeting Costs ***	832	11,299	740	9,918
Office Expenses ***	25,896	56,399	23,040	49,505
Currency Variance	16,895	(29,588)	15,032	(25,971)
Recruitment Expenses	11,394	16,543	10,137	14,521
Training	42,204	47,133	37,549	41,372
Insurance	18,709	17,631	16,645	15,476
Subscriptions	20,274	15,698	18,038	13,779
Auditors' Remuneration	19,100	19,100	16,993	16,765
Legal & Professional Fees	55,833	44,957	49,675	39,462
Cleaning & Catering	18,681	24,841	16,621	21,805
Maintenance & Repairs	102,292	103,468	91,009	90,821
Bank Charges	1,930	2,023	1,717	1,776
Records Management	<u>3,265</u>	<u>10,219</u>	<u>2,905</u>	<u>8,970</u>
	<u>1,210,564</u>	<u>1,308,373</u>	<u>1,077,039</u>	<u>1,148,451</u>

*The Board entered into an agreement in 2016 to lease a portion of the ground floor of the Cork Office to the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland (OPW) for a period of 10 years. The annual rent for this lease is €76,667 per annum, payable in quarterly instalments.

**The costs incurred for Foreign Travel in 2020 amounted to €1,319/£1,174 (2019 €8,037/£7,055).

***The hospitality element of costs in 2020 was €0/£0 (2019 €7,625/£6,693).

5. Research Programme Expenditure

	2020	2019	2020	2019
	€	€	£	£
Food Science	599,222	324,825	533,128	285,122
Human Health & Nutrition	237,669	319,095	211,454	280,092
Research Placement Projects	68,971	99,015	61,363	86,912
Community Food Initiatives	<u>258,199</u>	<u>228,274</u>	<u>229,720</u>	<u>200,372</u>
	<u>1,164,061</u>	<u>971,209</u>	<u>1,035,665</u>	<u>852,498</u>

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

6. Fixed Assets

	Office Equipment	Property & Fitout Cost	Fixtures & Fittings	Computer Equipment & Software	Total
	€	€	€	€	€
Cost or Valuation					
At 1st January 2020	233,037	1,811,949	336,705	511,504	2,893,195
Additions	0	0	45,055	25,436	70,491
Disposals	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
At 31st December 2020	<u>233,037</u>	<u>1,811,949</u>	<u>381,760</u>	<u>536,940</u>	<u>2,963,686</u>
Depreciation					
At 1st January 2020	228,738	1,308,963	254,843	484,000	2,276,544
Provision for the year	1,401	70,758	17,538	35,052	124,749
Disposals	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
At 31st December 2020	<u>230,139</u>	<u>1,379,721</u>	<u>272,381</u>	<u>519,052</u>	<u>2,401,293</u>
NBV at 31st December 2020	<u>2,898</u>	<u>432,228</u>	<u>109,379</u>	<u>17,888</u>	<u>562,393</u>
NBV at 31st December 2019	<u>4,299</u>	<u>502,986</u>	<u>81,862</u>	<u>27,504</u>	<u>616,651</u>

	Office Equipment	Property & Fitout Cost	Fixtures & Fittings	Computer Equipment & Software	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Cost or Valuation					
At 1st January 2020	198,268	1,541,606	286,469	435,187	2,461,530
Exchange Adjustment	11,239	87,391	16,660	24,907	140,197
Additions	0	0	40,085	22,631	62,716
Disposals	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
At 31st December 2020	<u>209,507</u>	<u>1,628,997</u>	<u>343,214</u>	<u>482,725</u>	<u>2,664,443</u>
Depreciation					
At 1st January 2020	194,610	1,113,665	216,821	411,787	1,936,883
Exchange Adjustment	11,046	63,793	12,454	23,670	110,963
Additions	1,246	62,953	15,604	31,186	110,989
Disposals	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
At 31st December 2020	<u>206,902</u>	<u>1,240,411</u>	<u>244,879</u>	<u>466,643</u>	<u>2,158,835</u>
NBV at 31st December 2020	<u>2,605</u>	<u>388,586</u>	<u>98,335</u>	<u>16,082</u>	<u>505,608</u>
NBV at 31st December 2019	<u>3,658</u>	<u>427,941</u>	<u>69,648</u>	<u>23,400</u>	<u>524,647</u>

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

7. Receivables

	2020	2019	2020	2019
	€	€	£	£
Receivables	29,504	55,664	26,525	47,359
Prepayments & Accrued Income	<u>203,562</u>	<u>200,149</u>	<u>183,008</u>	<u>170,287</u>
	<u>233,066</u>	<u>255,813</u>	<u>209,533</u>	<u>217,646</u>

8. Payables (amounts falling due within one year)

	2020	2019	2020	2019
	€	€	£	£
Payables & Accruals	521,076	511,424	468,463	435,120

9. Capital Grant Reserve

	2020	2019	2020	2019
	€	€	£	£
Opening Balance	616,651	718,854	524,647	643,036
Capital Additions	70,491	27,520	62,716	24,156
Capital Disposals – Cost	0	(383,178)	0	(336,342)
Capital Disposals - Depreciation	0	383,178	0	336,342
Currency Translation Adjustment			29,234	(28,678)
Less amount released to I&E A/C *	<u>(124,749)</u>	<u>(129,723)</u>	<u>(110,989)</u>	<u>(113,867)</u>
	<u>562,393</u>	<u>616,651</u>	<u>505,608</u>	<u>524,647</u>

*Amount released to I&E	2020	2019	2020	2019
	€	€	£	£
Amortised in line with depreciation	<u>(124,749)</u>	<u>(129,723)</u>	<u>(110,989)</u>	<u>(113,867)</u>
	<u>(124,749)</u>	<u>(129,723)</u>	<u>(110,989)</u>	<u>(113,867)</u>

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

10. Net Cash Inflow/(Outflow) from Operating Activities

	2020	2019	2020	2019
	€	€	£	£
Surplus/(Deficit) for the period	625,326	190,368	556,353	167,099
Transfer from Capital Grant Reserve	(124,749)	(129,723)	(110,989)	(113,867)
Depreciation Charges	124,749	129,723	110,989	113,867
(Increase)/Decrease in Debtors	22,747	59,747	8,113	64,632
Increase/(Decrease) in Creditors	9,652	(48,982)	33,343	(66,180)
Currency Translation Adjustment			<u>32,091</u>	<u>(20,617)</u>
	<u>657,725</u>	<u>201,133</u>	<u>629,900</u>	<u>144,934</u>

The currency translation adjustment reflects the amount of the movement in the value of current assets and liabilities which is attributable to the change in exchange rates over the year.

11. Analysis of the balances of cash as shown in the Balance Sheet

	At 01.01.20	Cashflow	At 31.12.20
	€	€	€
Euro Account	274,455	76,195	350,650
Sterling Account	518,347	577,171	1,095,518
Deposit Account	52	0	52
Petty Cash	450	(285)	165
Credit Cards	<u>6,732</u>	<u>4,644</u>	<u>11,376</u>
Total	<u>800,036</u>	<u>657,725</u>	<u>1,457,761</u>

	At 01.01.20	Cashflow	At 31.12.20
	£	£	£
Euro Account	233,506	81,739	315,245
Sterling Account	441,010	543,894	984,904
Deposit Account	44	3	47
Petty Cash	383	(235)	148
Credit Cards	<u>5,728</u>	<u>4,499</u>	<u>10,227</u>
Total	<u>680,671</u>	<u>629,900</u>	<u>1,310,571</u>

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

12. Promotion Activities

	2020	2019	2020	2019
	€	€	£	£
Media Costs	1,655,385	2,027,991	1,472,796	1,780,110
Marketing Costs	433,531	514,859	385,712	451,928
Events	15,996	95,766	14,232	84,060
Publications	16,471	52,686	14,654	46,246
Project & Conference Sponsorship	69,893	236,381	62,184	207,488
Educational Development	121,516	119,282	108,113	104,702
Helpline Activities	<u>17,458</u>	<u>10,571</u>	<u>15,532</u>	<u>9,279</u>
	<u>2,330,250</u>	<u>3,057,536</u>	<u>2,073,223</u>	<u>2,683,813</u>

13. General Reserve

	2020	2019	2020	2019
	€	€	£	£
Opening Balance	544,425	354,057	463,197	316,715
Surplus/(Deficit)	625,326	190,368	556,353	167,099
Currency Translation Adjustment			<u>32,091</u>	<u>(20,617)</u>
Closing Balance	<u>1,169,751</u>	<u>544,425</u>	<u>1,051,641</u>	<u>463,197</u>

14. Related Party Transactions

The Food Safety Promotion Board is a cross border implementation body sponsored by the Department of Health (I) and the Department of Health (NI) which are regarded as related parties. During the year, The Food Safety Promotion Board was principally funded by these departments and had various transactions with them. No Board member, key manager or other related party has undertaken any material transactions with the Food Safety Promotion Board during the year.

15. Future Capital Expenditure

The Food Safety Promotion Board had no capital commitments at 31 December 2020.

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

16. Leases / Commitments

a) Operating Leases

The Board has annual lease commitments in respect of operating leases on properties where the lease terms expire as follows:

	31.12.20	31.12.19	31.12.20	31.12.19
	€	€	£	£
Within 1 Year	-	-	-	-
Between 2 and 5 Years	190,000	190,000	170,816	161,652
More than 5 Years	<u>293,333</u>	<u>293,333</u>	<u>263,715</u>	<u>249,568</u>
	483,333	483,333	434,531	411,220

The Board entered into an agreement in 2016 to lease a portion of the ground floor of the Cork Office to the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland (OPW) for a period of 10 years. The annual rent for this lease is €76,667 per annum, payable in quarterly instalments.

The overall annual rent payable in respect of leased premises is broken down as follows:

Rents payable / (receivable)

	Expiry Date	31.12.20	31.12.19	31.12.20	31.12.19
		€	€	£	£
Cork	2026	370,000	370,000	332,641	314,796
Cork Sub Lease	2026	(76,667)	(76,667)	(68,926)	(65,228)
Dublin	2021	<u>190,000</u>	<u>190,000</u>	<u>170,816</u>	<u>161,652</u>
Total Annual Costs (Net)		<u>483,333</u>	<u>483,333</u>	<u>434,531</u>	<u>411,220</u>

The total future minimum lease commitment is broken down as follows:

Future Minimum Lease Commitments

	Expiry Date	31.12.20	31.12.19	31.12.20	31.12.19
		€	€	£	£
Cork	2026	2,127,500	2,497,500	1,912,686	2,124,873
Cork Sub Lease	2026	(396,062)	(472,729)	(356,072)	(402,198)
Dublin	2021	<u>190,000</u>	<u>380,000</u>	<u>170,816</u>	<u>323,304</u>
Total Future Lease Commitment (Net)		<u>1,921,438</u>	<u>2,404,771</u>	<u>1,727,430</u>	<u>2,045,979</u>

b) Other Commitments

The Board has other commitments in respect of approved research contracts at 31 December 2020 in the amount of €1,057,351/£950,590 (2019 €1,126,400/£958,341).

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

17. Retirement Benefits

The retirement benefit scheme consists of a number of sections with different benefit structures. The main sections are:

The Core Final Salary section- this is a final salary pension arrangement with benefits modelled on the Classic section of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme in Northern Ireland. The scheme provides a retirement benefit (eightieths per year of service), a gratuity or lump sum (three-eightieths per year of service) and spouse's and children's pensions. Normal Retirement Age is a member's 60th birthday. Retirement Benefits in payment (and deferment) increase in line with general price inflation.

The Core Alpha section -this is a career averaged revalued earnings retirement benefit arrangement or 'CARE' scheme with benefits modelled on the alpha section of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme in Northern Ireland. The scheme provides a retirement benefit based on a percentage (2.32%) of pensionable pay for each year of active membership (the retirement benefit is increased at the start of each scheme year in line with general price inflation) and spouses's and children's pensions. Normal Retirement Age is a member's State Pension Age in the relevant jurisdiction which is currently 67, 68 or between 67 and 68 in the UK and 68 in Ireland. Retirement Benefits in payment (and deferment) increase in line with general price inflation.

Benefits accumulated for service up to 31 March 2015 remain payable at retirement on a final salary basis. Therefore most core section members have benefits in both the Final Salary and alpha section and new entrants who join the Scheme after 1 April 2015 will in most cases, become members of the Core alpha section.

Reserved Rights Section -all Southern Core Members were given the option to change to a category of membership based on the Superannuation Scheme for Established Civil Servants (which is the Irish Civil Servants Scheme). The options exercise was completed on 31 March 2015 and 14 of the employees opted to change category of membership.

The retirement benefit valuation at 31 December 2020 is based on FRS102 convention and has been carried out by a qualified independent actuary. The results this year have been prepared by carrying out a full valuation of the scheme's liabilities incorporating market conditions and scheme data at 31 December 2019. The principal assumptions used to calculate scheme liabilities are:

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

a) Principal actuarial assumptions used for the calculations

	2020	2019
Discount rate (Ireland)	0.80%	1.30%
Discount rate (Northern Ireland)	1.35%	2.10%
Inflation rate (Ireland)	1.05%	1.15%
Inflation rate (Northern Ireland)	2.20%	2.00%
Rate of increase in salary (Ireland)	2.20%	2.00%
Rate of increase in salary (Northern Ireland)	2.20%	2.00%
Rate of increase in pensions (Ireland):		
Core members	1.05%	1.15%
All other members	2.20%	2.00%
Rate of increase in pensions (Northern Ireland)	2.20%	2.00%
Year-end exchange rate (Sterling : Euros)	1.11	1.18
Mid-year exchange rate (Sterling : Euros)	1.12	1.14
Average expected future life at age 65 for		
Male currently aged 65	22.3yrs	22.0yrs
Female currently aged 65	24.6yrs	23.9yrs
Male currently aged 45	23.6yrs	23.4yrs
Female currently aged 45	26.0yrs	25.4yrs

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

b) Movement in Net Pension Liability during the financial year

	2020 €'000	2019 €'000	2020 £'000	2019 £'000
(Deficit) in the retirement benefit liability at 1st January	(16,225)	(13,152)	(13,804)	(11,765)
Retirement Benefits paid during the year	127	186	113	163
Current service cost	(942)	(662)	(838)	(581)
Past service credit	0	0	0	0
Net transfers out of/(in to) the scheme	0	7	0	6
Other finance income/(charge)	(216)	(288)	(192)	(253)
Actuarial gain/(loss)	(2,582)	(2,316)	(2,297)	(2,033)
Exchange differences – £ comparisons	—	—	(817)	659
(Deficit) in the pension liability at 31 December	(19,838)	(16,225)	(17,835)	(13,804)

Analysis of the movement in (deficit) in the Plan during the period is as follows

	2020 €'000	2019 €'000	2020 £'000	2019 £'000
Gain/(loss) on change of financial assumptions	(2,318)	(2,354)	(2,062)	(2,066)
Gain/(loss) due to changes in demographic assumptions	(168)	0	(149)	0
Experience gain/(loss)	(96)	38	(85)	33
Gain/(loss) due to currency movements	0	0	0	0
Exchange differences – £ comparisons	—	—	(1)	0
Actuarial gain/(loss)	(2,582)	(2,316)	(2,297)	(2,033)

The main element of the actuarial loss relates to the change in actuarial assumptions which have increased the value placed on the liabilities.

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

c) Income and Expenditure Account analysis for the financial year

Analysis of the net deferred funding for retirement benefit is as follows:

	2020 €'000	2019 €'000	2020 £'000	2019 £'000
Current service cost	942	662	838	581
Other finance cost	216	288	192	253
Retirement Benefits paid during the year	(127)	(186)	(113)	(163)
Net transfers (out of)/in to the scheme	<u>0</u>	<u>(7)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(6)</u>
	<u>1,031</u>	<u>757</u>	<u>917</u>	<u>665</u>

Analysis of the current retirement benefit service costs is as follows:

	2020 €'000	2019 €'000	2020 £'000	2019 £'000
Current service cost	942	662	838	581
Other finance cost	<u>216</u>	<u>288</u>	<u>192</u>	<u>253</u>
	<u>1,158</u>	<u>950</u>	<u>1,030</u>	<u>834</u>

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

d) Deferred Retirement Benefit Funding

In accordance with accounting practice for non-commercial State sponsored bodies in Ireland, the Food Safety Promotion Board recognises an asset representing resources to be made available by the UK and Irish Exchequers for the unfunded deferred liability for retirement benefits on the basis of a number of past events. These events include the statutory backing for the superannuation schemes, and the policy and practice in relation to funding public service retirement benefits in both jurisdictions including the annual estimates process.

While there is no formal agreement and therefore no guarantee regarding these specific amounts with the funding bodies, the Food Safety Promotion Board has no evidence that this funding policy will not continue to meet this amount in accordance with current practice. This treatment is inconsistent with accounting practice for UK Non-Departmental Bodies, where, due to absence of a formal guarantee, a funding liability is not recognised until the commitment falls due.

The deferred funding asset for retirement benefits as at 31 December 2020 amounted to €19.838m/£17.835m (2019: €16.225m/£13.804m).

	2020 €'000	2019 €'000	2020 £'000	2019 £'000
Opening Balance at 1 January	16,225	13,152	13,804	11,765
Increase/(decrease) in Deferred Pension Funding	3,613	3,073	4,031	2,039
Balance at 31 December	19,838	16,225	17,835	13,804

e) History of Defined Benefit Liabilities

	2020 €'000	2019 €'000	2018 €'000	2017 €'000
(Deficit) as at 31 December	(19,838)	(16,225)	(13,152)	(13,210)
Experience adjustment on liabilities Including exchange rate effect gain/(loss)	(96)	38	(311)	650
Percentage of Scheme Liabilities	0.5%	0.2%	2.4%	4.9%

	2020 £'000	2019 £'000	2018 £'000	2017 £'000
(Deficit) as at 31 December	(17,835)	(13,804)	(11,765)	(11,720)
Experience adjustment on liabilities Including exchange rate effect gain/(loss)	(85)	33	(275)	570
Percentage of Scheme Liabilities	0.5%	0.2%	2.4%	4.9%

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

f) Sensitivity analysis

Change in the value of the liabilities	(€'000s)
Discount rate + 0.5%	(2,300)
Inflation + 0.5%	2,700
Mortality (1 year younger)	(700)

18. Contingent Liabilities

Two employment tribunal cases in the cases of McCloud and Sargent were brought against the UK Government in relation to possible discrimination in the implementation of transitional protection following changes made to public service pension scheme legislation in the UK in 2015.

In December 2018, the Court of Appeal ruled that the transitional protections gave rise to unlawful discrimination on the basis of age. The UK Government requested leave to appeal this decision to the Supreme Court, however the request was denied on 27 June 2019.

The Department of Finance (Northern Ireland) continues to liaise with UK treasury for proposals to address age discrimination in the wider public service schemes as a consequence of the McCloud ruling. Further, the rectification process is expected to be long and time consuming and will need to address fairly the issue of pension accruals since 2015 and where individuals may have been better off in new schemes. In this regard, certain staff of **safefood**, who are scheme members of the North South Pensions Scheme, may need to be compensated for any discrimination suffered as a result of transitional protection.

Quantifying the impact of the judgement at this stage is difficult as it will depend on the compensation awarded, members' full salary increases, length of service and retirement age and whether (and when) members withdraw from active service. The terms of any possible settlement will require further consideration which will need approval by both the Department of Finance (Northern Ireland) and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Ireland).

On this basis no provision has been made in the accounts for the McCloud/Sargent judgement.

The North South Pension Scheme actuary estimates that any compensation payable by **safefood** will be up to €250,000 (2019: €250,000).

Separately, submissions have been made to the Workplace Relations Commission in relation to pension contributions payable by certain members of staff. The cases have yet to be considered by the Commission and, as such, no provision has been included in the financial statements.

19. Date of Authorisation for issue

The Accountable Person (CEO) authorised the issue of these financial statements on 14/10/2021.

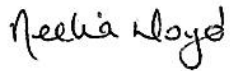
Appendix 1**Accounts direction****Food safety promotion board**

Accounts direction given by the Northern Department of Health and the Southern Department of Health, with the approval of the finance departments North and South, in accordance with the North/South Co-Operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 and the Southern British-Irish Agreement Act 1999.

The annual accounts shall give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year, and the state of affairs as at the year end. Subject to this requirement, the Body shall prepare accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2018 and subsequent financial years in accordance with:

- a) the North/South Implementation Bodies Annual Reports and Account Guidance;
- b) other guidance which Finance Departments may issue from time to time in respect of accounts which are required to give a true and fair view; and
- c) any other specific disclosures required by Sponsor Departments, except where agreed otherwise with Finance Departments, in which case the exception shall be described in the notes to the accounts.

Signed by the authority of the

Department of Health (NI)

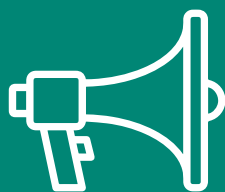
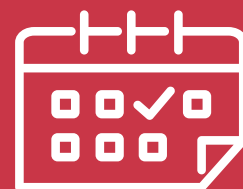
Dated
1 October 2019

Department of Health (S)

Dated
30 October 2019

For information search

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