Údarás Sábháilteachta Bia NA hÉIREANN
Food Safety AUTHORITY OF IRELAND

Candidate Information Booklet

Please read carefully

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) is undertaking a competition for the purpose of identifying a suitable candidate for appointment to the position of:

Chief Specialist, Chemical Safety

The Exchange, George's Dock, IFSC, Dublin D01 P2V6

Closing Date for receipt of completed applications: **Midnight, Monday, 23 November 2026**

Job Description

Title	Chief Specialist Chemical Safety
Reports to	Director of Food Science and Standards
Role level	Senior scientific leadership role

THE OPPORTUNITY

This is a senior scientific leadership role with national and European influence. The Chief Specialist Chemical Safety will shape how Ireland identifies and assesses chemical risks in food, provides authoritative advice during incidents, advises Government on regulation regarding food safety and chemical exposure and help ensure that official controls are scientifically robust and effective.

Working with a team of four scientists, the successful candidate will combine deep technical expertise with people leadership, sound judgement and the ability to explain complex evidence clearly. The role offers the opportunity to influence policy and legislation, collaborate with leading experts and institutions, and make a direct contribution to protecting public health and consumers' interests.

ABOUT THE FSAI

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland is an independent, science-based statutory body dedicated to protecting public health and consumers' interests in relation to food safety and hygiene. We regulate and oversee the enforcement of food law in Ireland, provide evidence-based advice to Government, support food businesses in meeting their obligations and work with our Official Agency partners to deliver a consistent and effective food control system.

Food law is largely developed at European level. The FSAI therefore works closely with the Department of Health, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the European Commission, the European Food Safety Authority and other national and international partners. Our work is overseen by a Board appointed by the Minister for Health and informed by an independent Scientific Committee and a Food Safety Consultative Council.

PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

The Chief Specialist Chemical Safety is the FSAI's principal source of scientific and technical advice on chemicals in food and the related national and European legislation. The postholder will lead the Chemical Safety Team, set and deliver its work programme, identify and assess current and emerging risks and support coordinated, risk-based official controls.

The postholder will advise the Director, the Senior Leadership Team, Government departments and other public bodies; support the FSAI Scientific Committee; and represent the FSAI with national and international stakeholders. As a senior leader, they will also contribute to organisational strategy, governance and cross-functional delivery.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

Scientific leadership and advice

- Provide authoritative scientific and strategic advice to the Director and Senior Leadership Team on managing chemical risks in food.
- Lead scientific risk assessments, including dietary exposure assessments and critical evaluation of toxicological hazard characterisations produced by EFSA and other recognised bodies.
- Lead the assessment of risks to consumer health arising from chemical incidents and provide clear, timely advice to inform appropriate risk management action.
- Maintain oversight of emerging chemical safety risks and translate relevant developments into practical priorities for the FSAI.
- Review and communicate scientific and toxicological evidence, including through participation in relevant EFSA advisory and working groups.
- Act as an FSAI spokesperson on chemical safety matters, including media queries, parliamentary questions and queries received through the FSAI Advice Line.

Team leadership and delivery

- Lead, support and develop the Chemical Safety Team, creating an inclusive environment in which expertise is shared, constructive challenge is welcomed and people can perform at their best.
- Set a clear, prioritised work programme aligned with the FSAI strategy, monitor delivery and adjust resources as risks and organisational needs change.
- Coach staff, provide clear feedback, manage performance fairly and develop the team's capability and resilience.
- Lead or contribute to projects under the FSAI Science Strategy and other cross-functional organisational priorities.

Policy legislation and official controls

- Advise the FSAI and Government on the development and implementation of national, European and international policy and legislation concerning chemicals in food.
- Represent the FSAI in relevant European Commission and Council working groups and Codex Alimentarius committees.
- Support risk-based, legally compliant chemical monitoring programmes delivered by Official Agencies and work with official laboratories to maintain appropriate testing capability.
- Provide scientific and technical advice to Official Agency partners on the enforcement of chemical safety legislation.
- Support FSAI oversight and audit of official controls, official laboratories and national reference laboratories, as required.

Scientific Committee incident and organisational contribution

- Provide technical support to the FSAI Scientific Committee, including leading scientific secretariat support for relevant subcommittees, developing requests for advice and drafting technical content for scientific opinions.
- Support food incident investigations and crisis management, working calmly and collaboratively where evidence is incomplete, risks are evolving or decisions are time-critical.
- Build trusted working relationships across the FSAI and with Government departments, Official Agencies, laboratories, universities, industry, consumer representatives and international partners.
- Contribute actively to management, governance and organisational improvement, uphold the FSAI's values and undertake other appropriate duties assigned by the Director.

The person we are looking for

We are looking for a person with a sound scientific background who can pair technical authority with accessible communication and inclusive leadership. The successful candidate will be intellectually rigorous and confident in their judgement, while remaining open to challenge and able to build agreement across disciplines and organisations. They will be comfortable moving between detailed scientific analysis, senior-level advice, team leadership and public communication.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

- A BSc (Level 8) degree in food science or a related chemical safety discipline.
- A PhD in food science or a related chemical safety discipline.
- At least seven years' postdoctoral experience in work encompassing food safety and risk assessment, including substantial experience of chemical safety as it relates to food.
- Specialist knowledge of chemical contaminants and residues in food, food improvement agents and food contact materials, together with knowledge of related areas such as food supplements.
- Strong working knowledge of Irish and EU food law as it relates to chemical safety, and an understanding of the FSAI's statutory role.
- Extensive experience of collating, summarising and critically evaluating complex scientific data and carrying out chemical safety risk assessment.
- Demonstrated experience of leading, developing and motivating people, setting priorities and managing performance and workloads effectively.
- Strong project management skills and the ability to manage several priorities while retaining a clear view of project risk, quality and outcomes.
- Experience of chairing or leading stakeholder meetings and explaining scientific evidence clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- Experience of horizon scanning and translating emerging evidence or trends into proportionate action.
- Effective written, presentation, influencing and negotiation skills, with sound judgement and the ability to work calmly under pressure.
- Digital proficiency, including confidence using Microsoft 365 and data tools to support analysis, collaboration and delivery.

Desirable experience

- A strong record of publication in peer-reviewed journals, expert reports or other authoritative technical literature.
- Experience of planning, reviewing or implementing risk-based chemical monitoring programmes.
- Experience of working collaboratively with Government departments, Official Agencies, the European Commission, EFSA or other international organisations.
- A thorough understanding of the food industry, its organisation, management and priorities.

REQUIRED COMPETENCIES

Leadership and Strategic Direction

- Leads the team, setting high standards, tackling any performance problems & facilitating high performance.
- Facilitates an open exchange of ideas and fosters and atmosphere of open communication.
- Contributes to the shaping of FSAI strategy and policy.
- Develops capability and capacity across the team through effective delegation.
- Develops a culture of learning & development, offering coaching and constructive/supportive feedback.
- Leads on preparing for and implementing significant change and reform.
- Anticipates and responds quickly to developments in the sector/ broader environment.
- Actively collaborates with other Departments, Organisations and Agencies

Judgment and Decision Making

- Identifies and focuses on core issues when dealing with complex information/situations.
- Assembles facts, manipulates verbal and numerical information, and thinks through issues logically.
- Sees the relationships between issues and quickly grasp the high level and socio-political implications.
- Identifies coherent solutions to complex issues and can think outside the box.
- Makes decisions in a timely manner and having the courage to see them through.
- Makes sound and well-informed decisions, understanding their impact and implications.
- Strives to effectively balances the sectoral issues, political elements, and the citizen impact in all decisions.

Management and Delivery of Results

- Initiates and takes personal responsibility for delivering results/services in own area.
- Balances strategy and operational detail to meet business needs.
- Manages multiple agendas and tasks and reallocates resources to manage changes in focus.
- Makes optimum use of resources and implements performance measures to deliver on objectives.
- Ensures the optimal use of ICT and new delivery models.
- Critically reviews projects and activities to ensure their effectiveness and that they meet Organisational requirements.
- Instils the importance of efficiencies, value for money and meeting corporate governance requirements.
- Ensures team are focused and act on Business plans priorities, even when faced with pressure.

Building Relationships and Communication

- Speaks and writes in a clear, articulate, and impactful manner.
- Actively listens, seeking to understand the perspective and position of others.
- Manages and resolves conflicts/disagreements in a positive & constructive manner.
- Works effectively, recognising & managing tensions arising from different stakeholder's perspectives.
- Persuades others; builds consensus, gains co-operation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals.
- Proactively engages with colleagues at all levels of the organisation and across other Departments/Organisations and builds strong professional networks.
- Makes opinions known when it is right to do so.

Specialist knowledge, Expertise and Self Development

- Develops and maintains skills and expertise across several areas that are relevant to their field and recognised by peers nationally and internationally.
- Keeps up to date with key departmental, sectoral, national, and international developments in the food sector including political and social trends that affect the role.

- Maintains a strong focus on self-development and achievement of scientific excellence seeking feedback and opportunities for growth.

Drive and Commitment to Public Service Values

- Consistently strives to perform at a high level.
- Demonstrates personal commitment to the role, maintaining determination and persistence while maintain maintains a sense of balance and perspective in relation to work issues.
- Contributes positively to the corporate agenda.
- Is personally trustworthy, honest, and respectful, delivering on promises and commitments.
- Ensures that public health is at the heart of all work.
- Is resilient, maintaining composure even in adverse or challenging situations.
- Promotes a culture that fosters the highest standards of ethics and integrity.

This job description is subject to change from time to time, in line with the FSAI's work requirements.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING

The FSAI is committed to a policy of Equal Opportunities. The FSAI's vision is to be a leader in diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, (DEI&B) in the Irish public sector. The FSAI and its staff is committed to:

- Treating all people equally and respectfully
- Being equitable and fair by working to attract and develop a diverse workforce and ensuring that individuals feel valued in their workplace.
- Being inclusive and seeking out and learning from multiple perspectives.

FSAI STRATEGY AND VALUES

The FSAI's current strategy sets outs our vision, purpose, values, strategic goals and objectives for the period 2025-2029.

Our Vision
Safe and trustworthy food for everyone

Our Purpose
As Ireland's independent regulator and the central competent authority for the enforcement of food safety legislation, we will protect consumers' health and interests by:

- Building a culture of food safety
- Improving food safety within a risk analysis framework
- Leading a robust food safety control system
- Continuing to drive organisational excellence

Our Values

- We develop and inspire people to build a better organisation through **teamwork**
- We act with **integrity** and are honest, open and independent in all we do
- We are **passionate** about protecting consumers
- We act with **respect** and take personal responsibility
- We recognise and value **collaboration** with our partners
- We are **transparent** and open, and we communicate clearly

More information can be found at https://www.fsai.ie/strategy/

Eligibility to compete and certain restrictions on eligibility

European Economic Area Nationals

Candidates should note that eligibility to compete is open to citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union along with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Swiss citizens under EU agreements may also apply. **To qualify candidates must be citizens of the EEA by the date of any job offer.**

Citizenship Requirements

Eligible candidates must be:

(a) A citizen of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; or
(b) A citizen of the United Kingdom (UK); or
(c) A citizen of Switzerland pursuant to the agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the free movement of persons; or
(d) A non-EEA citizen who has a Stamp 4 permission or a Stamp 5 permission.

To qualify, candidates must meet one of the citizenship criteria above by the date of any job offer.

Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform letter dated 28th June 2012 to Personnel Officers introduced, with effect from 1st June 2012, a Collective Agreement which had been reached between the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Public Services Committee of the ICTU in relation to ex-gratia Redundancy Payments to Public Servants. It is a condition of the Collective Agreement that persons availing of the agreement will not be eligible for re-employment in the Public Service by any Public Service body (as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011) for a period of 2 years from termination of the employment. People who availed of this scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility)

Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER)

It is a condition of the Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER) as set out in Department of Finance Circular 12/09 that retirees, under that Scheme, are not eligible to apply for another position in the same employment or the same sector. Therefore, such retirees may not apply for this position.

Department of Health and Children Circular (7/2010)

The Department of Health Circular 7/2010 dated 1 November 2010 introduced a Targeted Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Scheme and Voluntary Redundancy Schemes (VRS). It is a condition of the VER scheme that persons availing of the scheme will not be eligible for re-employment in the public health sector or in the wider Public Service or in a body wholly or mainly funded from public moneys. The same prohibition on re-employment applies under the VRS, except that the prohibition is for a period of 7 years. People who availed of the VER scheme are not eligible to compete in this competition. People who availed of the VRS scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility).

Department of Environment, Community & Local Government (Circular Letter LG (P) 06/2013)

The Department of Environment, Community & Local Government Circular Letter LG (P) 06/2013 introduced a Voluntary Redundancy Scheme for Local Authorities. In accordance with the terms of the *Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants* dated 28 June 2012 as detailed above, it is a specific condition of that VER Scheme that persons will not be eligible for re-employment in any Public Service body (as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011 and the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012) for a period of 2 years from their date of departure under this Scheme. These conditions also apply in the case of engagement/employment on a contract for service basis (either as a contractor or as an employee of a

contractor).

Declaration
Applicants will be required to declare whether they have previously availed of a Public Service scheme of incentivised early retirement. Applicants will also be required to declare any entitlements to a Public Service pension benefit (in payment or preserved) from any other Public Service employment and/or where they have received a payment-in-lieu in respect of service in any Public Service employment.

Principal Conditions of Service

Location

There is a hybrid work model in place with the office location based in The Exchange, George's Dock, IFSC, Dublin D01 P2V6.

Probation
A probationary period of 12 months applies to this position.

Pay
As per the current Government pay policy, the starting pay for this position will be at the minimum point of the payscale for the position (first point on scale). *If you are currently a serving civil or public servant, your entry point to the PayScale may be higher based on your current salary.*

The salary scale for this position is as follows: €115,645 - €118,537 - €121,427

Please note the rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy.

Superannuation
Pensionable public servants (new joiners) recruited on or after 1 January 2013 will be members of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme. The Single Public Service Pension Scheme applies to all pensionable first-time entrants to the public service, as well as to former public servants returning to the public service after a break of more than 26 weeks. In certain circumstances, e.g. where the public servant was on secondment or approved leave or remains on the same contract of employment, the 26-week rule does not apply. The legislation giving effect to the Scheme is the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012.

For those who are not subject to the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (e.g. those transferring from another public service employment where the break in service, if any, is less than 26 weeks), the terms of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Staff Superannuation Scheme will apply.

Pension Related Deduction
This appointment is subject to the pension-related deduction in accordance with the Financial Emergency Measure in the Public Interest Act, 2009.

Annual Leave
Annual leave is 30 days.

Selection Procedure

How to Apply
A completed application form must be uploaded online no later than **Midnight, Monday, 23 November 2026.**
If you would like to complete the application form in Irish, please contact recruitment@fsai.ie.

Selection Process
The Food Safety Authority of Ireland will convene a selection panel to carry out the competitive stages of the selection process to the highest standards of best practice. The approach employed may include:

- Shortlisting of candidates on the basis of the information contained in the application form to reduce the list of candidates to a more manageable number for interview
- A preliminary interview which may include a written exercise or assessment
- A final competitive interview which may also include a presentation
- Any other tests or exercises that may be deemed appropriate

During shortlisting, application forms are examined against agreed criteria which are based on the requirements of the position. The standard of content of each application submitted may also be assessed during this process. The shortlisting criteria may include both essential and desirable criteria specified for the position and, it is therefore in your own interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of your qualifications/experience in your application. The onus is on candidates to complete the application form fully and accurately.

The number of applications received for a position can exceed that required to fill existing and future vacancies. While a candidate may meet the eligibility requirements of the competition, if the numbers applying are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, FSAI may decide that a smaller number will be invited to the next stage of the selection process. This is not to suggest that other candidates are necessarily unsuitable or incapable of undertaking the job, rather that there are some candidates who, based on their application, appear to be better qualified and/or have more relevant experience.

Note:
The FSAI recognises that applicants may use AI tools to help prepare job applications and support their participation in the recruitment process. Applicants remain fully responsible for all content submitted.

All information provided must be accurate, truthful, and verifiable. Applications that misrepresent an applicant's skills, knowledge, qualifications, experience, or achievements may be excluded from the recruitment process.

Candidates will be asked during the selection process to explain, expand upon, or demonstrate the experience and competencies described in their application.

Interview Dates
The onus is on all applicants who are shortlisted for interview to ensure they are available for interview on the identified date.

Queries
Please email recruitment@fsai.ie with any queries.

General Information

Interview Expenses
The Food Safety Authority of Ireland will not be responsible for any expense, including travelling expenses, which applicants may incur in connection with their application for this post.

Candidates Obligations
Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify and will result in their exclusion from the process.

Candidates must not:
- Knowingly or recklessly provide false information
- Canvass any person with or without inducements
- Impersonate a candidate at any stage of the process
- Interfere with or compromise the process in any way

Where a candidate is found guilty of canvassing or in breach of any of the above then:
- Where he/she has not been appointed to a post, he/she will be disqualified as a candidate; or
- Where he/she has been appointed to a post, he/she shall forfeit that appointment

Deeming of Candidature to be Withdrawn
Candidates who do not attend for interview when and where required by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as the Food Safety Authority of Ireland require in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, their application will be considered withdrawn and they will have no further claim for consideration.

The Importance of Confidentiality
We would like to assure applicants that protecting confidentiality is our number one priority. Applicants can expect, and we guarantee, that all enquiries, applications and all aspects of the proceedings to the extent that they are managed by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, outside those directly involved in that aspect of the process. Applicants should note that all application material will be made available to the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

Data Protection and the Recruitment Process

Confidentiality
Candidate confidentiality will be respected at all stages of the recruitment process. All personal information provided on the application documents will be stored securely by the FSAI and will be used solely for the purposes of processing your candidature.

Legal compliance
The FSAI is committed to complying with all relevant legislation over the course of this recruitment campaign. This includes, but is not limited to, the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

Protecting personal data
Personal data is collected and processed as part of the recruitment process. This section sets out the relevant information under the following headings:

1. Personal data collected
2. Lawful basis for processing personal data

3. How your information may be shared
4. How long your information may be stored
5. Your data protection rights

1. Personal data collected

The FSAI collects personal data from prospective candidates as part of the recruitment process. In meeting its data protection obligations, the FSAI is committed to being accountable and transparent about how it gathers and processes this information.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) defines 'personal data' as meaning any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual. It defines types of 'personal data' as being name, address, date of birth, etc. The GDPR also sets out 'special categories of personal data' for more sensitive information which include, for example, data concerning health.

2. Lawful basis for processing personal data

The FSAI processes personal data provided by you in your application documents during the recruitment process on the lawful basis of 'consent'. Your consent is required in order to process any personal data provided in the application for the specific purpose of progressing an application through the recruitment process.

Contractual

In the case of a successful candidate, personal data provided during the recruitment process may form the basis of the contract of employment.

Legal obligation

Personal data of prospective candidates and current employees (full-time, part-time, contract and agency) are processed on the basis that they are required for the FSAI's compliance with legislation (e.g., employment legislation).

3. How your information may be shared

Your information may be shared with other parties as part of the recruitment process. Where this occurs, information is shared by necessity and in confidence.

4. How long your information may be stored

The FSAI has a Data Retention Policy that it applies to all information it stores. This policy is updated on an ongoing basis to keep pace with all relevant legislative changes.

Unsuccessful candidates

For those individuals who have been unsuccessful in the recruitment process, all information provided to the FSAI will be retained by the FSAI for a period of no more than 12 months. At the end of this period, or if you withdraw your consent, your information will be securely destroyed.

Successful candidates

For those individuals who have been successful in the recruitment process, all information provided to the FSAI will be placed on your employee file. It will be retained during the course of your employment with the organisation and for an appropriate period thereafter. At the end of this period, or if you withdraw your consent, your information will be securely destroyed.

5. Your data protection rights

You have rights in relation to the personal data collected, processed and stored by the FSAI. Further information is available on our website under the heading 'Data Protection and Access Requests.' That section outlines what your data protection rights are and how to make a Data Subject Access Request to the FSAI.

Further information

If you have any questions or would like to make a Data Subject Access Request, you may contact the Data Protection Officer (DPO) at the FSAI. The contact details are as follows:

By post	Data Protection Officer Food Safety Authority of Ireland The Exchange George's Dock IFSC D01 P2V6
By email	DPO@fsai.ie