

Supporting information for CFI core funding applications

Please read this document before making an application. It explains the general funding criteria.

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Safefood Community Food Initiatives

The main aim of the Community Food Initiatives programme is to positively influence the eating habits of people in low-income communities across the island of Ireland. It works to promote a greater access and availability of healthy and safe food in low-income areas using a community development approach. Since its inception, more than 50,000 people have taken part in a CFI activity.

Since 2010, Safefood has funded 73 organisations across the island of Ireland as part of the:

- Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives 2010-12
- Community Food Initiatives Programme 2013-15
- Community Food Initiatives 2016-18
- Community Food Initiatives 2019-21
- Community Food Initiatives 2022-24

The Community Food Initiatives (CFI) Programme 2025-28 is funded by Safefood and administered by SECAD Partnership CLG. Safefood is an all-island implementation body set up under the British-Irish Agreement (1999) with a general remit to promote awareness and knowledge of food safety and nutrition issues on the island of Ireland.

SECAD is a local development group which has managed and delivered a range of rural development and social inclusion programmes since 1995. SECAD has administered the CFI since 2016.

Community Food Initiatives (CFI) Programme 2025-28

The 2025-28 programme will have 3 main intervention actions:

Action 1: CFI core programme

- 28 community organisations will be funded, focusing on low-income areas across the island of Ireland:
 - Up to 18 in Ireland
 - 10 in Northern Ireland
- Chosen organisations will receive funding over a 4-year period to deliver programmes and on-going support in their communities.

Action 2: CFI cross-border partnership

- 4 cross-border projects will be funded focusing on low-income areas across the island of Ireland.
- A total of 8 organisations will be chosen with 2 organisations (1 each from Ireland and Northern Ireland) working in partnership to deliver programmes over a 4-year period.
- These organisations can be part of the CFI core programme. Organisations not part of the CFI core programme are also eligible to apply.

Action 3: CFI Innovate

- Up to 25 community organisations per year will be funded on the island of Ireland, focusing on low-income areas in each region.
- CFI Innovate will fund organisations to deliver one-off projects or other innovative projects. These organisations will not be part of the CFI core programme or CFI cross-border partnership.

Themes and target audiences of the CFI

Projects should focus on developing skills and knowledge that positively influence eating habits within their communities. Organisations should deliver projects under the following themes each year:

- cooking skills
- supporting an increased awareness/knowledge around healthy eating
- healthy shopping
- budgeting and food/meal planning skills
- preventing food wastage, promoting food safety and hygiene
- improving the availability and access to safe and healthy food in the community

Each CFI organisation will choose the target audience based on the needs of their local community.

Organisations will consider the following when choosing their target audience:

- vulnerable groups
- inclusivity
- reducing health inequalities

CFI core funding

Safefood is inviting organisations to apply for CFI core funding as part of its Community Food Initiatives Programme 2025-28.

Organisations receiving CFI core funding are referred to as CFI leaders. Core funding will be provided annually in euro or the sterling equivalent to each CFI leader organisation:

Local CFI administration*	€5,000 / £ sterling equivalent
Local CFI delivery**	€5,000 / £ sterling equivalent
- annual community dissemination activity	
- two to four small projects	
Total annual funding	€10,000 / £ sterling equivalent

* **Local CFI administration** to cover coordinator time, related overheads, travel and subsistence for local work and attending CFI networking events.

** **Local CFI delivery** to cover venue hire, promotion, speakers/tutors, etc.

If the absence of small essential equipment is a barrier for participants, these items can be funded as part of project costs subject to approval.

Eligibility

The objective for the CFI core funding is to create a significant impact within small geographic areas. This includes towns or specific areas within larger towns and cities. Focusing on local communities helps local organisations collaborate. This ensures they provide support that fits the needs of people living in these areas. This targeted approach will allow CFI leader organisations to create sustainable, community-driven change.

Each local CFI will be managed by a CFI leader organisation. As Safefood is an all-island body:

- 18 organisations will be funded in Ireland over a 4-year period, a minimum of 2 from each health region.
- 10 organisations will be funded in Northern Ireland over a 4-year period, a minimum of 1 organisation from each of the 5 Health and Social Care Trust regions.

Please see appendices for the lists and maps.

CFI leader organisations must:

- be community-led organisations with a legal status and appropriate governance structure.
- be experienced in the management of public funds which support social inclusion initiatives.
- currently employ and manage professionals with community development experience.
- have experience of working with their target group.
- be supporting other broader community initiatives through their work.
- be able to show the capacity to utilise the lessons learned from the delivery of the CFI programme within their services into the future.

On-going funding support will be subject to successful completion and meeting the requirements of the programme each year.

The funding cannot support pre-existing activity and proposals will need to demonstrate the addition of a new component that satisfies these criteria.

Role of the CFI leader organisation

The main role of the CFI leader organisations will be to act as champions for the CFI in their area of operation. This will be achieved through the following:

1. The CFI leader organisation will appoint a member of staff to co-ordinate the activities of the local CFI. The duties of the CFI co-ordinator will include:
 - overseeing the implementation of the local CFI leader plan and related actions
 - convening and taking minutes at steering group meetings
 - disseminate the Community Food Initiatives programme and their work to the wider community once per year. This could be through an event or story telling (e.g. video, booklet)
 - facilitating the delivery of two to four small projects (details below)
 - preparing and submitting a mid-year and end of year report on the impact of the CFI in the local area, which will include quantitative and qualitative information. A template will be provided.
 - the CFI leader organisation must maintain a record of and provide invoices marked paid or receipts for all expenditure relating to the annual activity and the small projects.
2. The CFI leader organisation will bring together organisations to form a local CFI steering group to identify and promote best practice under the CFI themes (outlined on page 4).

If the CFI leader organisation is already involved in an existing steering group or network, then the CFI activities can be included as a standing item on the agenda of the existing structure.

This steering group should contain expertise relevant for each project and target audience. For example:

- family resource centres
- youth organisations
- sports clubs
- food banks
- HSE/HSC
- community childcare organisations
- county / local council environment department
- sports partnerships
- environmental organisations with a focus on food waste

- Steering group members can change throughout the life of the programme. Each steering group must contain 4 or more members and meet a minimum of twice per year.

Or, if the organisation has an existing advisory structure, they can add the CFI programme as a standing item for this group. The structure must meet a minimum of 2 times per year.

At the beginning of each year, each CFI leader organisation with the support of their CFI steering group will complete and submit a proposal form. This form will outline their plans for the annual activity and the small projects (templates will be provided). The proposals must be evaluated and approved by SECAD and Safefood before the work is undertaken. Go to page 12 for guidance on the purpose of the local steering group.

- The following outputs will be generated by the CFI leader organisation and submitted with the mid-year and end of year reports. The minimum targets to be met each year are:

Steering group

Number of steering group meetings held per year	2
Number of stakeholder organisations involved in steering group	4

Annual event or Activity

Number of individuals attending community events (if chosen method of community dissemination)	20
Number of video views/speaking opportunities where video was shared (if chosen method of community dissemination)*	To be agreed at proposal stage
Number of booklet views/copies disseminated (if chosen method of community dissemination)*	To be agreed at proposal stage
Impact of other method of community dissemination as agreed*	To be agreed at proposal stage

*CFI leader organisations will have to describe how they plan to measure the impact of the activity

Small projects

Minimum number of individuals should participate in each small project	5
Case studies of CFI activities	1

Reporting templates will be provided to capture the key performance indicators (KPI)

5. In addition to reporting key performance indicators as listed above, each CFI leader organisation is responsible for evaluating their projects and dissemination activities. A pre- and post-project questionnaire that assess key nutrition and food related skills and behaviours will be provided and must form part of the evaluation process.
6. The CFI leader organisation will provide a written case study of one of their activities each year, a template will be provided outlining the information to be included.
7. The CFI leader organisation will actively encourage other community organisations to have healthy food options available during their activities when they are serving food/snacks.
8. Facilitate and recruit participants for focus groups (Consumer Insight Initiative).
9. The local CFI co-ordinator will be required to attend one in-person CFI leader networking event and three online meetings each year. Members of Steering Groups are also encouraged to attend these events.

Annual networking event

Representatives from each CFI organisation will meet the night before the event for networking, followed by a full day workshop. The workshop will provide the CFI organisations and other external organisations with an opportunity to present on their programmes and share learnings with a particular emphasis on best practice exemplars from across the island, Scotland, England and Wales. The events can also provide training on a relevant topic such as volunteering, sustainability, or recruitment of participants. Needs will be identified by the CFI organisations.

Safefood will cover overnight accommodation costs associated with attending the annual networking event. Travel and other related costs will come from the CFI leader organisation administration budget.

Online meetings

CFI leader organisations can discuss the delivery of the CFI in their local area and share knowledge and examples of good practice. Discussions will be facilitated around activities that did not work well and examples that were more successful.

10. The CFI co-ordinator will have a proven capacity to promote the work of the local CFI through various social media platforms and traditional media.
11. CFI leader organisations must support the evaluation of the CFI programme. This includes but is not limited to participating in a formal evaluation in Year 2 and Year 4. This may involve interviews or focus groups. The CFI leader organisation must also assist in identifying steering group members and participants to take part in formal evaluations.

All organisations involved in CFI activities must follow public health guidance.

Additional information

Annual dissemination activity

CFI leader organisations will design and deliver an annual dissemination activity which will promote and share the goals of the Community Food Initiatives to the wider community, e.g. community event, information booklet, video, etc. The purpose of the annual activity is to promote their work to the wider community.

During all CFI related activities, it is important that qualified experts are engaged as speakers or trainers. Nutrition experts must be vetted before they are booked to take part. See guidance on page 13.

Community events

- Events should be held on days, at times and in venues that will suit the attendees, in order to attract as many people as possible.
- Events should provide a range of interesting demonstrations from healthy eating experts, based on the CFI themes and specifically shaped for the target audience.
- Events should provide an opportunity for Safefood and the CFI partners in each area to promote their own work and the services they provide.
- Each CFI can decide when to hold the community events. During previous iterations of the CFI, CFI leader organisations have reported that attendance increases if the event is held during the summer or during an annual event such as Halloween. Associating the event with an existing community activity such as a festival or a family fun day can also help with attendance. (See the CFI case study booklets for ideas).
- Annual activities should be widely promoted through local press, social media platforms and through networking channels identified by the CFI steering group.

Other dissemination methods

- CFIs can suggest other ways of disseminating their work. This could be the creation of a video or a booklet or other ideas. CFIs are invited to suggest ways that they feel would be relevant to their community to disseminate the work of the CFI.
- The CFI is expected to report on the channels used to disseminate the programme and its impact. Measurements are to be agreed at the proposal stage.

- For example, the CFI could create a video that showcases a project, including the tutors, nutrition expert, CFI leader organisation and participants speaking about the programme and its impact. The CFI would report on the methods used to disseminate the video, the number of views and other relevant metrics as agreed at the proposal stage.
- See this video from Cork Kerry Community Healthcare on a cookery programme through Northside Community Health Initiative as an example:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6uyVfKTKDb0>
- Booklets are another possible method. Consider the 'Loaves of Laughs' booklet which captured recipes and memories from a group of men taking part in a cooking programme.

Small projects

- The CFI leader organisation will facilitate two to four small projects each year tailored to meet local needs related to healthy eating and food skills.
- These initiatives should take a programme approach where participants are supported over a period time.
- Funding will be provided for projects delivering support to the target group under one or more of the 6 CFI themes.
- A minimum of one small project should focus on the theme Improving availability and access to safe and healthy food. Examples of projects can be found in appendix 4.
- A minimum of 5 individuals should participate in each small project.
- The activity must provide a 'learning environment' for the participants in the project and must also result in a transferable record (such as a report, a video or other recording) that can be shared with others.
- **It is important that qualified experts are engaged to provide training or to speak during small projects. Nutrition experts must be checked before they are booked to provide training or speak during the small projects. See guidance on page 13.**

Steering groups

The purpose of the local steering group is:

- to support the design and delivery of the CFI leader organisation's activities throughout the year.
- to promote best practice under the CFI themes.

- to work with existing organisations and structures in their area to build long term sustainability for similar activities into the future.

If the CFI leader organisation is already involved in an existing steering group or network, then the CFI activities can be included as a standing item on the agenda of the existing structure.

Consumer insight initiative

From time to time, CFI participants are invited to take part in focus groups. In these groups, they are invited to give their views on Safefood campaigns and resources at the consumer-testing stage.

For example, CFI participants from around the island of Ireland contributed to the research which informed the Safefood Start campaign. They looked at advertisements and campaign resources. Then, they shared their feedback to the company developing the campaign. Changes were made as a result of the feedback and Safefood felt that the involvement of the CFI participants was vital to the success of the campaigns.

Qualified experts

Only qualified experts should be engaged to speak about nutrition at events or during small projects, whether this is part of a cookery programme or a standalone session dealing with any element of nutrition. Nutritionists or dietitians must be registered with one of the following governing bodies or professional organisations and must provide their registration number:

Health and Care Professions Council	www.hcpc-uk.org/check-the-register/
British Dietetic Association	www.bda.uk.com/about-dietetics/find-a-dietitian-near-me.html
CORU	www.coru.ie/check-the-register/

Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute	www.indi.ie/find-a-dietitian.html
Association for Nutrition	www.associationfornutrition.org/register/search-the-register

- Cookery tutors who have been trained under the ‘Healthy Food Made Easy’, ‘Cook it’ and ‘Food Values’ programmes may speak on the areas of nutrition covered as part of their training.
- Cookery tutors who are not listed on the above registers or who have not been trained under ‘Healthy Food Made Easy’, ‘Cook it’ or ‘Food Values’ may deliver cooking demonstrations but **must not speak about nutrition**.
- For listings of qualified experts who have private practices, please look in the registers in the table above.

CFI cross-border partnerships

Four cross-border projects will be funded focusing on low-income areas across the island of Ireland:

- Each cross-border project will comprise two partner organisations – one organisation from Ireland and one organisation from Northern Ireland.
- The partners in each of the four cross-border projects will work together to deliver programmes over a 4-year period.
- The two organisations involved in each partnership will deliver one programme per year.
- The programmes must include at least one joint activity between the two organisations involved in each project.
- These projects should take a programme approach where participants are supported over a period of time.
- Funding can also be used to deliver other innovative projects or initiatives that use food as a vehicle to address key health and social concerns for the local community.

The 2025-2028 CFI cross border partnership will only support new and innovative projects and initiatives. The following examples are outside the scope of the CFI cross border partnership:

- profit making or trading companies, individuals, local authorities or statutory bodies will not be funded
- a group's on-going project or running costs will not be funded
- the establishment of a new community garden or any capital costs such as a large piece of equipment or a vehicle will not be funded. However, pre-existing community gardens can be used as a setting in which new healthy eating and/or food skill development activities take place.

The following areas are within the scope of the CFI cross border partnership:

- Salary costs for core staff or hiring part-time staff for a particular aspect of the project by the organisation can be funded under the Programme.
- If the absence of small essential equipment is a barrier for participants, these items can be funded as part of project costs.

Budget

Organisations may apply for funding up to €2,650 (€5,300 per partnership). Of this, €650 per organisation is for travel related to the Cross Border Partnership (€1,300 total).

Making an application

Please contact Sinéad Conroy at sconroy@secad.ie to receive the link to register and to make an online application.

Please note that we have a security measure in place which means that your registration must be validated before you can access the Dashboard. Once your registration has been validated, you will receive an email advising you that you can proceed.

Closing date for application

The closing date is 21 March 2025

Organisations successful in securing funding through previous CFI Programmes may apply for this programme provided they comply with the criteria of the programme.

When completing your application form you will need to demonstrate:

- **Quality of proposal**

The information you provide will be essential to evaluate the impact of:

- the support your organisation currently provides
- the individuals supported; and
- the difference it makes to communities.

- **Evidence of a multi-sectoral, regional and social inclusion impact of your project:**

- organisations you will involve in the steering group
- how you will involve the target group participants

- **Evidence of need**

- Demonstrate how you know that the project is needed and if your organisation has carried out any research relevant to the application.
- This funding cannot be used to fund any existing projects that your organisation is currently delivering. It is important to highlight how the projects you are proposing will add value to the work your organisation is currently engaged in and why this funding is essential for the implementation of this additional support.

- **Your CFI vision and strategy**

This is the most important element of your application. This is your opportunity to detail how you will approach this opportunity to positively influence the eating habits (including purchasing, preparing and consuming healthier foods) over a four-year period of people living on a restricted household budget.

- In the first instance, please outline your overall vision for this project and what you want to achieve between 2025 and 2028, in the event that your organisation is awarded the contract as a CFI leader.
- You should then provide a brief summary on how you will achieve this and the type of activities you will deliver through the annual activity and small projects each year.
- You should refer to key stakeholders that will enable you to achieve this vision and what role they will play in this process.
- Finally, identify the specific area / location / groups where you propose to target the CFI during the four years if you are awarded this contract to become a CFI leader organisation.

Applications will be assessed using the following criteria:

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
Quality of proposal	10
Capacity of the organisation to deliver the CFI	20
Evidence of need and innovation	20
Access to and support for target group	20
CFI themes	20
Sustainability of approach	10
Total	100

Important to note – activities not covered by the funding

The 2025-2028 CFI programme will encourage innovative projects and initiatives however, the following examples are outside the scope of CFI 2025-2028:

- Commercial / profit making companies, individuals, local authorities or statutory bodies will not be funded.
- A group's ongoing project or running costs will not be funded.
- The establishment of a new community garden or any capital costs such as a large piece of equipment or a vehicle will not be funded. However, pre-existing community gardens can be used as a setting in which new healthy eating and/or food skill development activities take place.

Once you have submitted your application:

- You will receive confirmation that your application has been received.
- Our team will make checks to ensure the applicant organisation and project meets eligibility and criteria. Your application will then be assessed.

Assessment process:

- Applicants may be contacted as part of the assessment process to discuss the application and asked to submit further information in support of their application. The evaluation committee will include Safefood representation.

Notifying you on the outcome of your application:

- Successful applicants will be notified within ten working days of a decision being made and will receive a funding offer and contract, which must be accepted and returned before any funding payment is made. Along with the contract, successful applicants will receive the necessary funding payment guidance.
- Once contracts have been signed, all unsuccessful applicants will be informed of this.
- If an application is deferred, additional information may be requested in order that your application can be reconsidered.
- Applicants are advised not to incur any expenditure before receiving a funding offer letter and the Contract has been accepted.

Key milestones

Online information session	19 March 2025
Closing date for applications	21 March 2025
Evaluation of applications	Week commencing 7 April
Notification of outcome and issuing of contracts to new CFI leader organisations	Week commencing 7 April
Launch of CFI 2025-2028	Week commencing 5 May

For those who are awarded a contract, you will be required to provide more detailed information at a later stage, before the formal launch.

**If you need assistance with any element of your application
before you submit it for evaluation,
please contact Sinéad at
sconroy@secad.ie | +353 (0)87 354 3606**

Appendix 1 – Health and Social Care Trusts

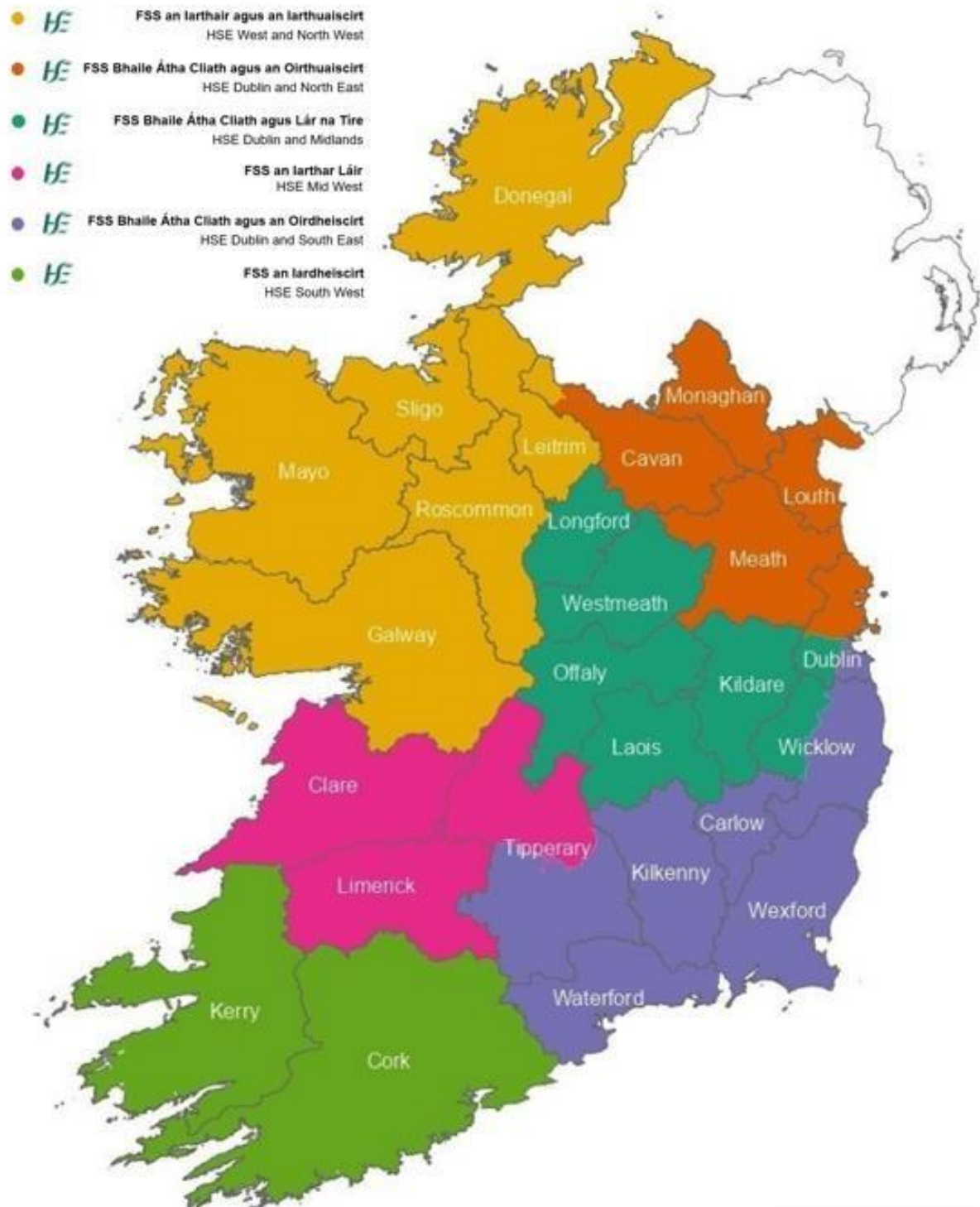
5 Health and Social Care Trusts in NI

- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
(covering local council areas of Belfast and Castlereagh)
- South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
(covering local council areas of Newtownards, Down, North Down and Lisburn)
- Northern Health and Social Care Trust
(covering local council areas of Coleraine, Moyle, Larne, Antrim, Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey, Ballymoney, Ballymena, Magherafelt and Cookstown)
- Southern Health and Social Care Trust
(covering local council areas of Dungannon, Armagh, Craigavon, Banbridge and Newry and Mourne)
- Western Health and Social Care Trust
(covering local council areas of Derry, Limavady, Strabane, Omagh, and Fermanagh)



Appendix 2 – HSE Health Regions

6 HSE Health Regions in Ireland



Appendix 3 – key learnings

Between 2010 and 2024, Safefood funded projects across the island of Ireland as part of the:

- Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives 2010-2012
- CFI Programme 2013-15
- CFI Programme 2016-2018
- CFI Programme 2019-2021
- CFI Programme 2022-2024

Each programme was independently evaluated and learnings integrated into subsequent programmes. The key learnings from these evaluations include:

- CFI leader organisations need to integrate their activities into existing local supports and services for longer term sustainability.
- A focus on food (e.g. planning, budgeting, shopping) and cooking skills is most beneficial.
- The two first CFI programmes supported the development of community gardens and these were excellent ways of engaging the community. However, establishing community gardens took up a lot of resources at the expense of engaging more people in developing core food and cooking skills.
- Future programmes should include a focus on improving access to healthy food through more innovative ideas outside of a project approach.
- Future programmes should continue to facilitate networking and training for CFI leader organisations.
- Programme delivery method should be flexible involving face-to-face and remote engagement.

Appendix 4 – project examples

Examples of projects that could be delivered under Theme 6:

- Increasing availability and access of safe and healthy food

The Little Food Revolution

Award to encourage local businesses and organisations to commit to creating healthier food environments for children. Participants are asked to take simple, cost-effective measures, including:

- 1) Avoiding the distribution of ultra processed high-fat, high-sugar foods to children
- 2) Training staff on healthy food policies for children
- 3) Offering healthier food choices, such as:
 - A portion of fruit or vegetables with meals (e.g. a small fruit skewer, a cup of soup, or carrot sticks with hummus)
 - Wholegrain carbohydrates (e.g. sandwiches made with brown bread or serving brown bread with soup)
 - Appropriately sized desserts
 - Water as the default drink

Businesses that join the programme will receive an official certificate and sticker to display, showcasing their commitment to children's health.

They will also be featured in promotional activities, unless they choose otherwise.

<https://westcorkpeople.ie/health-lifestyle/rewriting-the-recipe-for-children-in-west-cork/>

Cork Food Map

- Catalogue and analysis of food businesses in Cork and the patterns related to where they are located.
- The map is a tool to address the food-related issues by providing evidence to recommend and initiate policy change for a healthier Cork City.

<http://corkfoodpolicycouncil.com/the-cork-food-map/>

Whiteinch Cross Food Market Glasgow

- Weekly community food market bringing affordable fruit, vegetables, meat and fish to the local community.
- Set up with just a table and links with local food producers.
- Local community members man the stand.
- See photos here: <https://www.facebook.com/WhiteinchC/posts/whiteinch-cross-food-market-on-every-saturday-10-2-smith-st-opp-seamstress-often/968389668646446/>