
Scottish Food Commission

Head of Engagement and Communications

Job Description and Person Specification

Location: Home working, with regular in-person meetings and travel. Office base requirements may be considered.

Hours: 30 hours per week, flexible and part-time working can be considered

Contract: Permanent

Reports to: Chief Executive

Context

The Scottish Food Commission was established within the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022, and has the following core functions:

- To keep under review progress in achieving the outcomes in the national good food plan and the good food nation plans of relevant authorities, and the effectiveness of those plans in addressing food-related issues.
- To advise, inform and assist the Scottish Ministers and relevant authorities with a view to promoting and supporting progress in achieving the outcomes in the national good food nation plan and the good food nation plans of relevant authorities, and improving the effectiveness of those plans in addressing food-related issues.
- The Commission may make formal recommendations
 - to the Scottish Ministers as to action which it considers should be taken in relation to the national good food nation plan,
 - to a relevant authority as to action which it considers should be taken in relation to the authority's good food nation plan.
- The Commission may, in particular, for the purpose of its functions
 - carry out, commission or support any research it considers appropriate,
 - seek any independent and expert advice it considers appropriate,
 - acquire, compile and keep under review information about food-related issues,
 - keep under review implementation of any international obligation of the United Kingdom relating to a food-related issue,
 - have regard to developments in, and information on the effectiveness of, legislation on food-related issues elsewhere in the world.

The Commission is now establishing its initial staff resource to enable it to deliver these core functions.

The first National Good Food Nation Plan was published by the Scottish Government in December 2025, and work is commencing across the 32 Local Authorities and 14 territorial Health Boards to deliver their plans, with an anticipated publication date of Spring 2028.

The post-holder can expect to be closely involved in monitoring the delivery of the National Plan and in supporting the relevant authorities in developing their plans over the next 24 months.

The Commission will need to build trusted relationships, engage diverse perspectives and communicate its scrutiny, advice, research and recommendations in ways that are accessible, transparent and influential.

The Vision and Purpose of the Scottish Food Commission

The Vision of the Commission is

Making food work for all.

The defined purpose of the Commission is

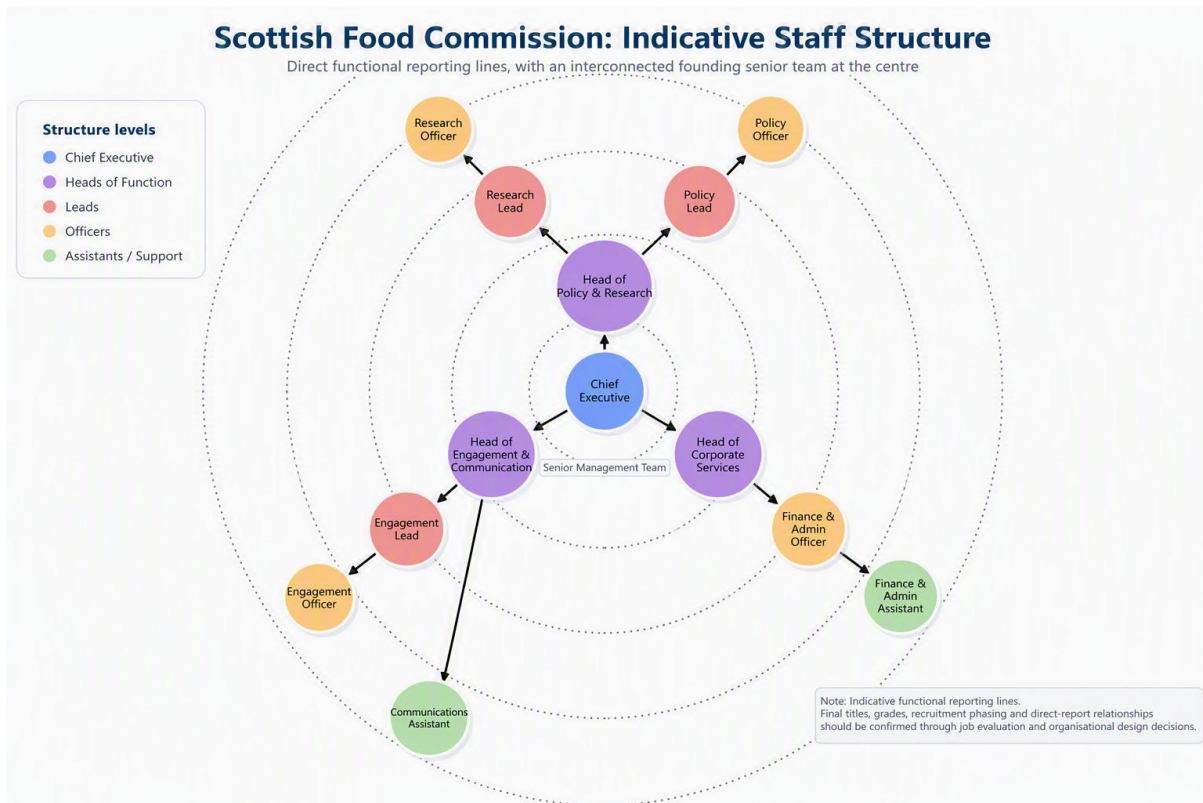
We lead stewardship and oversight of the Good Food Nation Act by engaging diverse perspectives, scrutinising and applying constructive challenge, building mutual understanding and common ground, learning from best practice at home and abroad, to drive transformational change of Scotland's food system into a fairer, healthier and more sustainable system for all.

Our Values

The Senior Team members will work with the members of the Commission to develop the values for the organisation before recruiting their direct report(s).

Team Structure

The structure of the organisation is proposed as follows:



Purpose of Role

This is a senior leadership role with responsibility for the Commission's engagement across the food system particularly with the Relevant Authorities, interested parties' relationships, public involvement, communications strategy, digital channels, publications and public profile.

You will ensure the Commission engages diverse perspectives, including relevant authorities, communities, people with lived experience of food-related issues, children and young people, and interested parties across Scotland's food system.

You will lead communications that make the Commission's work clear, accessible, inclusive and impactful, while safeguarding its statutory independence and reputation as a credible and constructive body.

You will work closely with the Head of Policy and Research to ensure engagement informs scrutiny, evidence, advice and recommendations, and with Corporate Services to ensure publication processes, organisational coordination and corporate requirements are well managed.

The role requires excellent engagement, facilitation, relationship-building and strategic communications capability, with strong judgement in handling sensitive or high-profile issues.

As a member of the Senior Management Team, you will also have an organisational leadership role, working closely with the Chief Executive and other

Heads of Function to ensure the Commission is effective, independent, collaborative and influential.

Statutory functions led by this post

The Head of Engagement and Communications will have lead responsibility for the following functions:

- Leading on engagement with relevant authorities as they develop their local Good Food Nation plans.
- Supporting review of progress in achieving outcomes in the national and relevant authority Good Food Nation plans by designing engagement that brings diverse perspectives into the Commission's scrutiny.
- Supporting advice, assistance and formal recommendations by ensuring public, community, expert and interested parties' insight is gathered, understood and communicated appropriately.
- Seeking and coordinating independent and expert advice, where this relates to engagement, communications, participation and affected communities, in partnership with the Head of Policy and Research.
- Supporting acquisition, compilation and review of information about food-related issues through insight from engagement and communication channels.
- Leading accessible, inclusive and transparent communication of the Commission's role, work programme, advice, reports and recommendations.
- Leading the formal issuing, publication and tracking of advice, reports and recommendations to Scottish Ministers and relevant authorities, working with the Head of Corporate Services.

The post will support, but not lead, the Commission's formal policy recommendations, communications, publication, finance, governance and corporate reporting functions.

Key duties of the role

Delivery

- Develop, implement and lead the Commission's engagement and communications strategy including media, interested parties' communications, digital channels, publications and brand development.
- Design and lead short and long term inclusive engagement with relevant authorities, food system interested parties, communities and people with lived experience, ensuring approaches are sustainable and designed to learn rather than be extractive.
- Design and lead engagement activities that ensure children and young people are active contributors to food systems change.
- Ensure engagement activity reflects the diversity of Scotland and supports the Commission's purpose of building mutual understanding and common ground.

- Create trusted spaces for dialogue, constructive challenge and shared learning across public bodies, civil society, academia, community organisations, business and the food sector.
- Develop constructive relationships with policy, communications and engagement leads across Scottish Government, local authorities, health boards, public bodies, civil society, academia and the food sector.
- Work with the Head of Policy and Research to translate engagement findings, lived experience and interested parties' insight into scrutiny, advice, research priorities and recommendations.
- Ensure the Commission's reports, recommendations, advice, research findings and engagement outputs are published accessibly, inclusively, in plain English where appropriate, and in line with statutory requirements.
- Build the Commission's reputation and profile as an independent, credible and constructive statutory body.
- Manage the Commission's online presence and social media platforms, ensuring they are well managed, up to date, accessible and aligned with the Commission's voice and purpose.
- Provide high-quality advice to the Commission Board and Chief Executive on engagement insight, communications opportunities, reputational risks and public positioning.
- Represent the Commission at senior level in engagement, communications, public participation and interested parties' forums.
- Work with Corporate Services to coordinate publication timetables, channels, accessibility checks, internal communications and operational support for events and engagement activity.
- Propose, develop, prioritise and lead agreed programmes of work within the Commission's business plan.

Management Team and Organisation

- Contribute to the strategic leadership of the Commission as a member of the Senior Management Team.
- Work collaboratively with the Chief Executive, Head of Policy and Research, and Corporate Services to ensure integrated delivery across policy, research, engagement, communications, governance and corporate support.
- Motivate, empower and support direct reports, creating a culture of learning, accountability and wellbeing.
- Hold delegated budget responsibility for relevant engagement and communications programmes and ensure expenditure is planned in accordance with the Commission's budget and procurement requirements.
- Support organisational planning, risk management, performance monitoring and reporting.
- Promote high standards of engagement practice, inclusion, accessibility, transparency and ethical handling of lived experience and community insight.
- Lead by example in promoting curiosity, constructive challenge, independence, inclusion and continuous improvement.

- Be proactive in professional development, maintaining an active interest in engagement practice, communications, public participation and food systems developments.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications & professional experience	A relevant degree or equivalent professional experience. Experience of leading inclusive engagement, communications, public participation, interested parties' relationships or organisational influence programmes. Awareness of food systems policy context.	Professional qualification or training in communications, engagement, facilitation, public participation, social research, public policy or related field. Experience of working in or with a public, statutory, charitable or similar organisation.
Engagement and relationships	Proven ability to design and deliver inclusive engagement with diverse interested parties. Ability to manage sensitive relationships and create trusted spaces for dialogue and challenge. Strong facilitation and communication skills. Experience engaging communities or people with lived experience, or demonstrable ability to apply inclusive and ethical engagement practice.	Experience designing engagement with children and young people. Established networks across public bodies, civil society, food sector, academia or community organisations
Communications and influence	Excellent written and verbal communication skills. Experience developing communications strategies, communications plans, publications or interested parties' communications. Ability to communicate complex issues clearly and accessibly. Strong judgement in handling sensitive, high-profile or reputational matters.	Experience of media handling, digital communications, accessible publishing or public information campaigns. Understanding of inclusive communication duties.

Insight and impact	Ability to gather, interpret and present engagement insight clearly to inform scrutiny, advice and recommendations Understanding of how lived experience, public insight and expert perspectives can inform policy and organisational decisions.	Experience of evaluation, impact assessment, feedback loops or reporting on engagement outcomes.
Corporate management	Strong management skills and the ability to lead and empower staff. Ability to work as part of a senior management team providing organisational leadership and direction. Experience of business planning and budget management.	Experience of working in a new, developing or small organisation.
Professional development	Willingness to learn and take on new areas of responsibility.	Evidence of ongoing commitment to continuous professional development.
Other	Willingness to travel across Scotland and the UK to fulfil requirements of the post.	