



CONFIDENTIAL CANDIDATE PACK
Director of Sustainability



INTRODUCTION

The Food and Drink Federation (FDF) is a trade body that advises UK food and drink manufacturers. It represents over 1,000 members, from renowned global brands such as Coca-Cola and Kellogg's to pioneering start-ups such as Genius Foods and Ella's Kitchen.

In 2021, food and drink manufacturing employed over 400,000 people and contributed £30bn to the UK economy, it represents the largest manufacturing sector in the country.

This pack introduces the FDF and provides an overview of the vacancy for the Director of Sustainability. It has been produced by executive search firm Birchwood Knight to provide a starting point for further research.

THE FOOD AND DRINK FEDERATION (FDF)

The FDF was founded over 100 years ago, to represent and advocate for the UK's diverse food and drink manufacturing industry. It has a powerful voice, successfully contributing to policy making and legislative development, championing their members' views – large and small – on the critical issues of the day.

The FDF unites business, government and stakeholders to ensure the industry's manufacturers have the right conditions to grow, invest and employ, while continuing to produce high quality, nutritious and affordable food and drink.

The FDF's members have access to unrivalled policy insight and expertise affecting food and drink manufacturing across the UK. They have a deep understanding of industry issues, which ensures they are well placed to deliver results for their members.

Their areas of focus are:

- **Business insights and economics** – providing economic analysis to ensure the financial importance of the sector is widely recognised, as well as its potential for growth and improvements, and that businesses in the sector get the right support from governments (national and regional) in order to thrive.
- **Managing inflation** – working with government to ensure that they act appropriately towards the industry as companies manage soaring inflation in inputs and strive to avoid passing price rises to consumers to keep food affordable.
- **Innovation** – developing the food and drink of tomorrow, and underpinning ambitions around sustainability, healthy diets or safety, as well as building new technologies into food manufacturing processes, supporting businesses' success and productivity.
- **Environmental sustainability** – FDF members have continued to significantly reduce carbon emissions and water consumption as part of their commitment to minimise their environmental impact. Companies are also reducing their packaging and ensuring it is recyclable and reusable, alongside focusing on a range of other environmental issues, from eco-labelling to reducing food waste.
- **Diet and health** – FDF members are committed to ensuring people have access to a wide range of food and drinks that support balanced lifestyles.
- **International trade** – informing the government's trade and border policy priorities, and providing advice to help members trade successfully internationally.
- **Food safety and science** – a significant part of FDF's work is working with DEFRA and the FSA to ensure a strong regulatory framework in the UK underpins the provision of safe, authentic and traceable food, which is of the highest importance to the FDF and the sector.
- **Workforce and employment** – developing workforce skills, fair employment regulations, and ensuring access to labour.

The FDF employees around 70 people who are organised into seven expert teams across England, Scotland and Wales to help members navigate the complex and rapidly evolving policy landscape.

FDF STRATEGY AND SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

The FDF aims to create the optimum business environment in which its member companies, and the broader food and drink sector, can thrive through providing expert advice and support.

The FDF is in the process of agreeing a new, five-year strategy with its members. This will set out what the industry, and the FDF in its support, want to achieve over the coming period, to help companies across the sector grow and thrive.

One of the five strategic priorities focuses on how the industry acts together and collaborates with others (from governments to other sectors and the third sector) to build a sustainable food system – from the use of energy, to plastics and packaging, food waste, water use, supply chains and eco-labelling. This strategic priority, and the work the FDF will need to do with its members in order to deliver it, will be in development when the new Director of Sustainability arrives. The postholder will be expected to input into what the FDF want to achieve and how best to implement it.

The function is currently supported by the FDF's Sustainability Committee and the Packaging Task Force, which is comprised of senior operational and production executives from a range of member companies. These committees meet to discuss strategic issues concerning the industry's sustainability and operations, thus helping to shape the work of the FDF and the sustainability team.

THE ROLE

The FDF has a hard-working, collaborative culture with passionate employees, the majority of whom are based at the FDF's London headquarters, with others based at the FDF's Scottish and Welsh offices. The Director of Sustainability reports into the Chief Executive and is part of the FDF's leadership team. They will manage four industry experts and drive the sustainability agenda by collaborating with members and partner organisations to develop key policies which will safeguard sustainability and the future of the industry.

The successful candidate will be adept at providing strategic advice and delivering tactically. They will have a strong understanding of priority issues, as well as being comfortable with technical detail, and be familiar with sustainability functions at different stages of maturity. They will need to build key relationships within member companies, as well as with UK government, regulators, allied trade bodies and other organisations, in order to effectively represent members' views and drive the FDF's agenda. This role requires someone to develop a thorough understanding of policy issues within the sector and the ability to effectively communicate to a broad range of stakeholders in order to achieve positive outcomes for the industry.

FDF LEADERSHIP TEAM

Karen Betts OBE, Chief Executive
David Thomson, Chief Executive – FDF Scotland
Pete Robertson, Chief Executive – FDF Cymru
Jayne Almond, Director of Policy & Corporate Affairs
Kate Halliwell, Chief Scientific Officer
Holly Smedley, Chief Financial Officer
Danielle Price, Head of HR

BOARD AND PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE

The Board and President's Committee leads the FDF's strategic and policy direction. The Committee receives reports from all the other policy committees in order to agree the Federation's overall policy and public positioning. It is chaired by the President and membership is by invitation of the President.

SUSTAINABILITY TEAM

Emma Piercy, Head of Climate Change and Energy
David Bellamy, Senior Environment Policy Manager
Natalie Verner, Senior Sustainability and Environmental Policy Executive
Sabina Woloszyn, Senior Sustainability Executive (Plastics and Packaging)

FURTHER CONTENT

In addition to exploring the FDF's [website](#) and recent media coverage, we also recommend:

- Reading the Job Description (Appendix 1)
- Reading FDF's [Ambition 2025: Progress report 2021](#)
- Reading FDF's [insights on food and drink manufacturing returning to growth in May](#) (July 2022)
- Listening to FDF industry experts on [developments within the UK food industry](#)
- Reading the FDF's [response to the UK Government's Food Strategy](#) (June 2022)
- Reading "[Why collaboration is key to the net zero goal](#)" in The Grocer (January 2022)

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact Kate Dyer or Wayne Reynolds at Birchwood Knight on kdyer@birchwoodknight.com or wreynolds@birchwoodknight.com

Appendix 1 – Job Description**FOOD AND DRINK FEDERATION**

Job Title: Director of Sustainability
Department: Sustainability
Reporting to: Karen Betts OBE, Chief Executive
Location: London

Job purpose:

The next decade is going to be critical for the UK's food and drink industry, as we work to make our businesses sustainable into the long term across the full range of the industry's businesses and operations. The challenge is immense, across large and small businesses, and it's urgent.

The jobholder will lead on developing a vision and workplan for the sector across the range of sustainability issues with a short-, medium- and long-term focus, from net zero to the circular economy, to supply chains, labelling, biodiversity and ethics. They will work closely with FDF's members to agree what can be achieved by when across the industry and what support companies need from FDF. The jobholder will also work with members to establish, through using the right levers, what the right interventions and collaborations are with government and other partners, and how the industry collaborates in a pre-competitive space. The role will also cover the food systems change we will need to see over time in order to make long term sustainability possible, within achievable tolerances.

Principle accountabilities:

Convening and leading the FDF's diverse range of members (in terms of products and in terms of size of company) will be key. The jobholder will:

- Lead on creating a sustainability vision and strategy, with a short, medium and long-term focus, and advocate for it effectively, alongside members and other partners.
- Lead on the issues and find innovative ways to foster collaboration across the sector, ensuring the industry can work together in tackling the hardest challenges, and that companies can learn from one another. Work collaboratively and successfully with the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations, ensuring policy that affects the industry is joined-up and will be effective.
- Analyse and predict the future policy and regulatory environment that will affect food and drink manufacturers, to ensure the industry can argue for the right regulation at the right time from government – anticipating it and shaping it – rather than follow government's regulatory lead, to avoid ending up on the back foot.
- Ensure that Extended Producer Responsibility can be rolled out in the UK in a way that works for manufacturers as well as government. Ensure it is cost-effective. Ensure all involved communicate successfully to consumers.
- Map-out partners in this space, from members to intra-sector partners, to cross-sector partners, third sector organisations, the waste industry, supply chain partners and others to ensure we are building alliances where we can and arguing effectively for good regulation that will help the industry achieve its aims as well as work towards government policy goals. Work with Courtauld 2030 to establish a successor programme to Ambition 2025.
- Build FDF's reputation as leading body in sustainability through building external profile on related issues.
- Develop a programme and suite of support for manufacturers on sustainability, in particular for SMEs.
- Review the structure and TOR of the FDF Environmental Sustainability Committee to deliver on member needs and the sustainability strategy.
- Lead two FDF teams of experts to shape and deliver the FDF's sustainability strategy.

- Collaborate across the FDF team, playing a strong role at Leadership Team level, and lead the FDF's internal strategy on sustainability issues.

Experience:

- Track record of success in leading on sustainability issues in industry, government, another member organisation or in the third sector.
- Strong intellectual capabilities, with experience of developing and leading strategies for action across the range of sustainability issues as they impact the food and drink sector and our supply chain. Ability to understand complex, sometimes intractable problems, and work with others (internally and significantly externally) to craft solutions. This takes creativity as well as a grounding in the facts.
- A strong communicator, capable of developing sophisticated, creative communications strategies and plans, and using them to land the right messages with the right audiences in order to achieve influence and the desired outcomes. This should include ability to deliver digital communications content. Be prepared to act as FDF's spokesperson on sustainability issues.
- Sophisticated understanding of government, politics and economics, and of how industry engages effectively on sustainability issues. Able to navigate Whitehall, on the basis of a strong range of Whitehall/Westminster contacts.
- Proven track record of managing complex sets of stakeholders, with intricate and sometimes conflicting needs. Experience of building constructive, weight-bearing relationships across the public and private sectors, and influencing in a public-policy space.
- Experience of understanding a range of customers, and of inculcating a customer-focus mindset. An understanding of how sustainability affects companies commercially.
- Senior level responsibility, with experience of leading, motivating and managing teams and delivering great results through them, as well as participating in organisational leadership and contributing to organisational change and the evolution of a modern and innovative culture.
- Experience of consistently looking for new and innovative ways to use resources to maximise outcomes.
- Experience in food and drink sector, and/or membership organisation useful.

Skills and knowledge:

- Executive presence and credibility, with the ability to operate with poise under pressure, including in public.
- Strong at building and maintaining weight bearing relationships at senior levels, which are leveraged to provide workable, pragmatic solutions to complex problems for FDF members
- Accomplished communicator, internally and externally – able to tell a clear and compelling story of the industry's journey on sustainability and deal with both positive and critical feedback.
- An understanding of the broader political and strategic dimensions of sustainability issues, and experience of analysis and making recommendations for action.
- Leading a team of high calibre/highly motivated individuals by establishing challenging but achievable business, team and personal goals.
- Highly effective influencing skills.
- A focus on outcomes and excellent problem-solving skills.
- Strong intellectual abilities, able to work with complex details and chart a way through them to find the right key messages which will land with the right impact. Comfortable with economic data – able to interpret and use it effectively, and lead the team in its collection and interrogation.
- Strong interpersonal skills, able to build and maintain a wide range of stakeholder relationships, able to operate successfully and collaboratively within diverse teams, drawing on own and others' experience and new ideas to drive performance and results.
- Project management skills
- Openness to continuous development, for themselves and encouraging it in their team.

Qualifications:

- Scientific, sustainability, environmental or other relevant degree, and/or relevant senior executive experience