

**Application for board member role
 (Please complete all sections)**

Full name:	Chris Macey
Name of member stroke support organisation:	Irish Heart Foundation
Position held in member stroke support organisation:	Director of Advocacy and Patient Support
Country of member stroke support organisation:	Ireland

What contribution do you hope to make to SAFE and the stroke patient community as a member of the board?

- I have been SAFE treasurer for the last three years. From a precarious situation then, the organisation's finances are now in good shape. I hope to continue this work, focusing on overseeing the maintenance of the sound financial base SAFE needs to meet its strategic priorities.
- I want to help SAFE further develop its advocacy and lobbying power along with its ability to support members so SAP-E is implemented throughout Europe and acute stroke care, rehabilitation and post discharge services and supports are a health priority in each country.
- I want to help develop our collaboration with ESO, particularly in developing the evidence base and recommendations on a common European services and supports pathway for stroke survivors after they are discharged from hospital. I believe this is the best approach to improving life after stroke services across Europe.

Please select any of the following where you have a specific expertise that would be useful to the board.

Accounting	X
Communications	X
Education and Training	
Fundraising	
Governance	X
Human Resources	
Public Affairs	X
Research	X
Strategy	X
Other	Running stroke support organisations

What personal expertise and professional strengths will you bring to SAFE and the stroke community? Mention any relevant experience.

Public Affairs – As Director of Advocacy for the Irish Heart Foundation I have led a campaign that has played a key role in reducing stroke deaths in Ireland by over 25% and the need for discharge to institutional care by 50% in the last 10 years. I was previously a Special Adviser in the Irish Prime Minister’s Department and in the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Communications – I have a long track record in successful communications and awareness raising as a journalist, within Government and for NGOs. This includes leading a campaign that trebled FAST awareness so that 87% of the Irish population knew the warning signs. I was a national newspaper journalist in Ireland for over 15 years, specialising in politics and health issues and am a former Director of Communications for the Rehab Group, one of Europe’s biggest providers of services to people with disabilities.

Governance – I have been the chairman of Ireland’s longest established stroke support organisation, the Volunteer Stroke Scheme since 2013, which I’m currently amalgamating with the Irish Heart Foundation’s support services. I’m also a former chairman of the Neurological Alliance of Ireland. Each of these organisations are officially recognised as

meeting the highest standards of governance. I undertook a diploma in accounting and finance in 2014-2015 as part of meeting these obligations.

Research – I am involved in most of the clinical research that takes place in Ireland and am on the steering committee of the Irish Stroke Clinical Trials Network. I have also been closely involved many other stroke related research programmes, including the Cost of Stroke in Ireland, the economic benefits of Early Supported Discharge programmes, returning to work after stroke and the experiences of stroke survivors living in the community.

Running stroke support organisations – I have gained significant understanding of the needs of SSOs through my involvement with Ireland’s oldest stroke support organisation, the Volunteer Stroke Scheme, which I’ve led for the last nine years and in setting up patient support services from scratch in the Irish Heart Foundation over the last five years. These are now supporting 6,000 people – around 3,500 of whom are members of our stroke support network.

How would your election to the SAFE board benefit your organisation?

- ESO is the organisation that sets the guidelines for stroke in Ireland. SAFE’s efforts to encourage ESO to develop recommendations on post discharge services and supports will improve our chances of securing more realistic funding from the health authorities for our support services.
- SAFE’s efforts to make stroke a priority at EU level also has positive implications in terms of funding for my organisation
- The Irish Heart Foundation has given a commitment to be at the cutting edge of support service development. Close involvement in SAFE enables me to learn from other SSOs and apply best practice in Ireland.

I confirm that the information contained in this application is correct, and that neither me, or my organisation, have been subject to any financial/legal or other such investigations in the past 12 months.

Signature:

Chris Mung

Date: 16/05/2022

Once completed, please return this form, along with a recent curriculum vitae to the SAFE Secretariat @ info@safestroke.eu

A letter from the board of your organisation supporting your nomination should be submitted separately to the Secretariat.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Chris Macey

Professional Profile

- Extensive experience across a broad spectrum of strategic management roles during over 35 years of working at a senior level in the NGO sector, national print journalism, as a Government Special Adviser and company director.
- Strong leadership qualities, including at the head of organisations facing serious governance and funding challenges; in delivering change within organisations; and in building teams with a reputation for professionalism, passion and achievement.
- Expert communicator and influencer exemplified by high profile campaigns that transform public opinion and shape often complex areas of national policy. Communications background includes driving news agendas in national newspapers and dealing with high profile crisis situations in the corporate and political spheres.
- Solid commercial acumen honed by establishing and running new businesses. Proven ability to work effectively on and with Boards; implement good governance processes; ensure tight financial control of organisations and programmes; execute sustainability strategies; and secure funding from the State and private sectors.
- Collaborative and strategic qualities highlighted by developing powerful patient and professional networks; coalitions that build influence and lobbying power; and harnessing stakeholder support to deliver new community services and supports.
- Driven by a commitment to a society that is just, fair and in which every person matters.

Career Details

April 2009 – Present Director of Advocacy and Patient Support, Irish Heart Foundation

In this role I established an advocacy department in the Irish Heart Foundation that has professionalised the organisation's engagement with the decision making process and now exerts significant influence on public policy formulation.

Key advocacy achievements include:

- Developed and implemented a national stroke campaign that has played a key role in reducing stroke deaths by over a quarter and rates of permanent severe disability by half. This included a multi-award winning FAST campaign that increased awareness of stroke symptoms almost threefold to the highest recorded national rate globally.
- Built patient support services from scratch to deliver high grade, responsive and impactful services to 6,000 people living with cardiovascular disease, including a stroke network that supports around 3,500 stroke survivors and carers.
- Secured a Government commitment to a sugar sweetened drinks tax through a painstaking five-year process of persuading the Department of Finance across a wide range of issues such as the feasibility, collectability, income and potential unintended consequences of the levy, as well as the health impact.
- Initiated and led a coalition of health and children's charities to counter a major lobbying and legal campaign mounted by the tobacco industry against plain packaging of tobacco legislation.

Other achievements include: a last-ditch Government reprieve preventing the destruction of Ireland's repository of bloodspot cards vital to identifying those at risk of sudden cardiac death; a Programme for Government commitment to review VAT on charities; reinstating annual increases in tobacco taxation; legislation increasing penalties for tobacco smuggling; agreement from Irish airlines to provide AEDs on all flights; major investment in cardiac rehabilitation services; and legal protection for first responders to medical emergencies.

On an organisational level, I have led a shift in the Irish Heart Foundation's strategic focus from essentially being a health promotion organisation to also becoming a genuine patient organisation. This includes the creation of a more visible and vibrant presence in communities, such as the development of national networks of stroke and heart support groups under my direction.

I act as the organisation's key spokesperson across many policy-related issues; I am an avid supporter and collaborator on a plethora of advocacy-focused and clinical research projects; and I participate in various Government, HSE and international working groups and bodies of relevance to the Irish Heart Foundation agenda. This includes being appointed to a Department of Finance Working Group to investigate reducing the VAT burden on charities.

November 2013 – Present Chairman of the Volunteer Stroke Scheme (VSS)

The VSS is the longest established stroke support organisation in Ireland. I joined the Board in 2013 after it was threatened with closure following serious breaches of company law and took over day-to-day management of the organisation. I assembled a new Board, of which I am chairman. Having resolved all outstanding issues with the Revenue Commissioners and CRO and undertaken a thorough governance overhaul, including amendments to the organisation's memorandum and articles, new support groups have been initiated and a strategy is in place to merge the organisation with the Irish Heart Foundation.

October 2011 - October 2014 Chairman, Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI)

The NAI is the national umbrella group of 30 charities representing 700,000 people with neurological conditions in Ireland. I became chairman in 2011 after joining the Board the previous year. This was a hands-on role requiring a close working relationship with staff members. Under my leadership, the NAI significantly enhanced its ability to shape national policy relating to neurological services and care. By implementing stricter governance procedures and a strategy to secure its long-term sustainability, I succeeded in putting the organisation on a firmer footing. I led a successful national campaign to restore State funding to the NAI and a large number of other neurological charities after it was arbitrarily withdrawn. And I developed a programme to enhance the individual advocacy and lobbying strength of neurological charities that has strengthened the sector's voice among policymakers.

May 2007 – April 2009 Managing Director, Progress Publishing

I launched a company publishing local newspapers and magazines, including *Insight*, the main publication for the Irish disability sector, leading a team of 14 full and part-time staff. Market conditions made it necessary to suspend operations. Although inactive, the company remains solvent with quite significant assets. The quality of these publications was recognised at the highest level in the Irish media, resulting in an unsolicited offer to me of a senior executive position with Independent Newspapers.

February 2000 – May 2007 Director of Communications, Rehab Group

In this senior management position I was responsible for corporate communications and strategic media relations across Rehab, a large and disparate non-profit organisation, then comprising over 30 companies run by 3,000 staff serving 60,000 people a year. I managed 18 people, including a team of disabled journalists employed in Rehab's Mediability company. I led major campaigns to promote the rights and abilities of people with disabilities, ran the People of the Year Awards and had an exemplary record in crisis communications. Internationally, I was a key member of a small team that trebled the global membership of Workability International, an umbrella group representing organisations ultimately employing two million people with disabilities, including as head of its marketing committee.

July 1997 – February 2000 Senior Journalist, Sunday Independent

After the 1997 General Election I was approached by the *Sunday Independent* to provide insightful news and news feature coverage on important events of the week with an emphasis on crime and politics. I broke a number of major stories, particularly in relation to high profile criminal investigations.

June 1995 – June 1997 Special Adviser Departments of the Taoiseach and Foreign Affairs

Following the closure of the *Irish Press*, I was headhunted for this post. My responsibilities included strategic communications, media relations and advising the Minister for European Affairs and Local Development on key areas of his brief. This included a heavy workload during Ireland's 1996 EU Presidency. I was closely involved in delivering a multi-faceted communications programme to promote the State's role in developing the IFSC and with various local development and job creation initiatives.

November 1983 – May 1995 Senior Journalist with Irish Press Newspapers

Initially employed as a general reporter for all the Press titles, I moved exclusively to the *Evening Press* in 1990, covering the news of the day with particular emphasis on politics and crime. I worked regularly on the newsdesk, deciding daily news coverage and news features. In covering all the big stories of the era, I earned a reputation in Irish journalism for my ability under pressure to 'get the story' and to write with style and integrity. I broke many big news stories and wrote several hundred lead articles for Press titles.

January 1991 – July 1991

I took leave of absence from the Irish Press to establish a franchise operation in Ireland for the US-based education company *Futurekids*. This involved setting up learning centres and selling franchise territories nationwide. When I left, the company was employing 35 people. It is still operating successfully today.

Other Activities

I've never been a member of a political party, but following my role in the Rainbow Government, I have continued to advise politicians of all parties on policy and media. I contributed to the strategy to revitalise Fine Gael after the 2002 election and in 2004 was a member of the party's Local and European Election Committees. This included helping put together the FG Manifesto and communications guidelines for candidates. From 2005 until the 2007 General Election I was a member of FG's Policy Resource Group, chaired by Enda Kenny. At this time I regularly wrote the *Irish Times'* Drapier column.

Education

St Benildus College, Kilmacud, Co Dublin 1976-1981.

Dublin Institute of Technology, graduated in Journalism in 1984.

Dublin Business School, Diploma in Accounting and Finance 2014-2015.

Hobbies and Interests

I have a deep interest in current affairs, domestic and international politics, history and journalism. I've played most sports, some at a decent level and remain an avid follower, particularly of cricket, National Hunt racing and Gaelic games. These days, however, I live most of my dreams through my three children - Jack, Katie and Ben, to whom I happily give most of my spare time.