

What is the cost of a healthy food basket in Northern Ireland in 2022?

Low-income households:		Research to find out the cost of a food basket that is:	
<p>Eat less well</p>	<p>Higher level of diet-related disease</p>	<p>Realistic and acceptable</p>	<p>Nutritionally adequate</p>

Household type	Total basket cost	% of take home income	
<p>Two-parent Two-child Primary and secondary school</p>	<p>£169 Per week</p>	<p>45% Dependent on State Benefits</p>	<p>31% One adult employed (earning the National Living Wage)</p>
<p>Two-parent Two-child Pre-school and primary school</p>	<p>£128 Per week</p>	<p>34% Dependent on State Benefits</p>	<p>23% One adult employed (earning the National Living Wage)</p>
<p>One-parent Two-child Pre-school and primary school</p>	<p>£110 Per week</p>	<p>33% Dependent on State Benefits</p>	<p>25% Adult employed (earning the National Living Wage)</p>
<p>Pensioner Living alone</p>	<p>£64 Per week</p>	<p>29% Dependent on State Pension</p>	

Cost of healthy food basket



Objectives

To estimate the cost of a minimum essential food basket and to present the cost as a proportion of take-home income for four household types in Northern Ireland

Methodology

A methodology known as the 'Consensual Budget Standards' was used. This approach is consumer-led rather than being expert-led.

Food menus that met a Minimal Essential Standard of Living (MESL) while meeting nutritional needs were developed by consumers in 2014 and 2016. For each household three focus groups were used to include both urban and rural households and a social class mix. The 2020 basket costs were updated for 2022 by applying the United Kingdom Consumer Price Index.

Result

Household type	Total basket cost			Income scenarios	Take home income	Proportion of take home income
	2020	2022	Change			
Two-parent, two-child (primary and secondary school)	£162	£169	4.3%	State benefits	£379	45%
				One adult employed earning the National Living Wage	£549	31%
One-parent, two-child (pre-school and primary School)	£105	£110	4.6%	State benefits	£335	33%
				Adult working and earning the National Living Wage	£436	25%
Two-parent, two-child (pre-school and primary school)	£122	£128	4.7%	State benefits	£379	34%
				One adult earning the National Living Wage	£549	23%
Female Pensioner living alone	£61	£64	4.9%	State pension	£222	29%

Key conclusions

- From 2020 - 2022, the minimum essential food basket cost increased by between 4.3% and 4.9%. For the first time in this research series, average food prices are now higher than in 2014.
- Low-income households need to spend approximately one third of their take-home income to buy a minimum essential food basket.
- For households with children, an average of two thirds of the minimum food costs are for meat, fruit, vegetables, milk, cheese, eggs, bread and cereals, which increased between 3% and 7% between 2020 and 2022.
- For a pensioner living alone, minimum food costs increased by 4.9%. Increases in the cost of the social inclusion aspects of the food basket accounted for a quarter of the increase.
- From 2020 to 2022, temporary cost of living supports contributed to a change in the proportion of household income. Without these supports the increase in minimum food costs would have exceeded the change in net household income for families reliant on state benefits.
- The MESL food basket includes allocations (e.g. eating out of home and food for visitors) that reflect the social cultural aspects of food ensuring that households can participate in activities and practices considered a normal part of everyday life).



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