

# What is the cost of a healthy food basket in Northern Ireland in 2020?

## Low-income households:

Eat less well

Higher level of diet-related disease



## Research to find out the cost of a food basket that is:



Household type	Total basket cost	% of take home income	
<p><b>Two-parent Two-child</b> Primary and secondary school</p>	<p><b>£162</b> Per week</p>	<p>46% Dependent on State Benefits</p>	<p>32% One adult employed (earning the National Living Wage)</p>
<p><b>Two-parent Two-child</b> Pre-school and primary school</p>	<p><b>£122</b> Per week</p>	<p>34% Dependent on State Benefits</p>	<p>24% One adult employed (earning the National Living Wage)</p>
<p><b>One-parent Two-child</b> Pre-school and primary school</p>	<p><b>£105</b> Per week</p>	<p>34% Dependent on State Benefits</p>	<p>25% Adult employed (earning the National Living Wage)</p>
<p><b>Pensioner Living alone</b></p>	<p><b>£61</b> Per week</p>	<p>32% 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 2018 basket costs were updated for 2020 by applying the United Kingdom Consumer Price Index.

## Result

Household type	Total basket cost			Income scenarios	Take home income	Proportion of take home income
	2018	2020	Change			
<b>Two-parent, two-child</b> (primary and secondary school)	£159	£162	1.5%	State benefits	£355	46%
				One adult employed earning the National Minimum Wage	£509	32%
<b>One-parent, two-child</b> (pre-school and primary School)	£103	£105	1.5%	State benefits	£312	34%
				Adult working and earning the National Minimum Wage	£417	25%
<b>Two-parent, two-child</b> (pre-school and primary school)	£120	£122	1.6%	State benefits	£355	34%
				One adult earning the National Minimum Wage	£509	24%
<b>Pensioner living alone</b>	£60	£61	1.9%	State pension	£191	32%

## Key conclusions

- Low-income households need to spend approximately one third of their take-home income to buy a minimum essential food basket.
- Minimum food costs are highest for a household with an older child, secondary school age costing approx. 33% more than for a household with younger children.
- Food poverty is multi-dimensional, it encompasses both the lack of access to a nutritionally adequate diet, and the consequential impact on health and social participation. 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.

*“the reality of living on a low income is not recognised and politicians don’t understand the reality of having to live on so little”*

*“Clothes, gas and electricity are quite high for somebody who is a single parent.”*

*“We eat to celebrate social events, we build social relationships by inviting people to eat with us”*



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