

What is the cost of a healthy food basket in NI in 2020?



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Foreword

This research updates the cost of a Minimum Essential Food Basket, for four household types, in Northern Ireland to 2020.

Two previous research projects, in 2014 and 2016, worked with members of the public in multiple 'deliberative focus groups' across Northern Ireland, to agree what should be included in a minimum essential, but nutritionally adequate and socially acceptable, food basket.

This research uses Consensual Budget Standards methodology to establish the cost of the food element of a Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL) for four household types.

Separate groups of members of the public met for each household type, in three locations across Northern Ireland, and through iterative in-depth discussions, reached a consensus on what the food baskets should include.

This report presents the cost of the minimum essential food basket for the four household types, adjusted to reflect food costs in 2020, building on the data published thus far for 2014, 2016 and 2018. This demonstrates the average weekly cost of healthy food, and the level of household income that may need to be spent on attaining this minimum standard.

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Executive Summary

Aim

This research calculates the cost of a Minimum Essential Food Basket for 4 household types with low-income scenarios in Northern Ireland in 2020. Previous research was undertaken in 2014 (1) and 2016 (2) with members of the public in multiple focus groups across Northern Ireland to agree what should be included in a minimum essential, nutritionally adequate and socially acceptable food basket.

Method

This research uses Consensual Budget Standards methodology to establish the average weekly cost of the food element of a Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL) for 4 household types in Northern Ireland adjusted to reflect food costs in 2020. Households included were:

- Two-parents, 2 children (pre-school and primary school age)
- Two-parents, 2 children (primary and secondary school age)
- One-parent, 2 children (pre-school and primary school age)
- Pensioner female living alone.

A low-income scenario was used to establish the percentage of take-home pay spent on a healthy food basket for the four household types, for example, a working-age household where one adult was employed, the income source applied was social welfare payments and/or the National Living Wage (NLW), the state pension was used for a pensioner.

The 'UK Consumer Price Index data' was used to update the price for 2020 from the 2018 price. The online calculator, www.entitledto.co.uk was used to help generate the income scenarios. Income calculations are based on the current 2020/21 rates for the National Living Wage, personal taxation and State Benefits as detailed on www.gov.uk.

Key findings

Table 1 presents the data on costs (as an absolute value in pounds sterling (£) and as a proportion of take-home income) of the acceptable and healthy food basket for four low-income households.

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Table 1: Cost of a weekly minimum essential food basket (£) and cost of basket as a percentage of take-home income for 4 household types in Northern Ireland in 2018 and 2020

Household	Cost of food basket per week			Income Scenario	Net Income	Food basket cost as a % of take-home income	
	2018	2020	Change			2018	2020
Two parents and two children (pre-school and primary school)	£120	£122	1.6%	State benefits	£355	34%	34%
				One adult employed, earning NLW	£509	26%	24%
Two parents and two children (primary and secondary school)	£159	£162	1.5%	State benefits	£355	46%	46%
				One adult employed, earning NLW	£509	35%	32%
One parent and two children (pre-school and primary school)	£103	£105	1.5%	State benefits	£312	33%	34%
				Adult employed, earning NLW	£417	28%	25%
Pensioner, female living alone	£60	£61	1.9%	State pension	£191	33%	32%

- The cost of a minimum essential food basket for the four household types ranged from £61 to £162.
- Minimum food costs are highest for a household with an older child, second level age, costing approximately one third more than for a household with younger children.
- School meals and milk makeup a notable share of minimum food costs (12%) for a two parent household type with a primary and second level age child.

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- For households with children, an average of two-thirds of the minimum food costs are on meat, fruit, vegetables, dairy products, and bread & cereals. Four of these areas increased in price between 2018 and 2020, apart from dairy products, which decreased by 0.6%.
- The cost of the minimum essential food basket increased by between 1.5% and 1.9% for households from 2018 to 2020.
- The minimum food costs for a female pensioner living alone showed the greatest increase, 1.9%. As the social inclusion aspects of the food basket, which are crucial for this household type, increased in price at a higher rate than other aspects of the minimum food basket.
- The ending of the 'benefits freeze' has increased incomes for the households with children reliant on state benefits, examined here. Increases in food costs have outpaced the adjustment in State Benefits, and 2020 food costs account for a marginally larger proportion of income than in 2018.
- Increases in 'National Living Wage', Universal Credit, and the temporary Covid-19 'uplift' have added a notable 10-13% to net household income in the employed scenarios examined. This has resulted in a reduction in the proportion of income required to meet minimum food costs.
- The percentage of take home income required for minimum food costs ranged from 24% to 46%. The highest costs for two parent family with one child in secondary school and the lowest costs for families with one parent earning the NLW.

1 Introduction

Food poverty is defined as ‘the inability to have an adequate and nutritious diet due to issues of affordability and access to food, with related impacts on health, culture and social participation being felt’. Food poverty therefore not only affects what people eat, it also impacts on people’s lifestyles, social interactions and health. It is a core experience of poverty. Data published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency show that 17% of the population were in relative poverty in 2019/20 and 13% in absolute poverty (before housing costs) (3).

The Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL) research applies the ‘Consensual Budget Standards methodology’. This method involves working with members of the public to reach agreement on the minimum needed to live and partake in the social and economic norms of everyday life. Through engaging with multiple deliberative focus groups, iterative in-depth discussions with members of the public produce a negotiated consensus on what people regard as essential for a socially acceptable minimum standard of living.

The research identifies what is needed to meet physical, psychological and social needs at a minimum but acceptable level. It is not a poverty standard and represents a minimum level which people have agreed nobody should be expected to live below.

This report presents the cost of the minimum essential food basket for the four household types, adjusted to reflect food costs in 2020. The baskets first established for 2014 (1) and 2016 (2), are adjusted to 2020 prices using the appropriate CPI (four-digit level) classification, as published by the Office for National Statistics¹.

It is important to note that the data presented does not take account of the additional food-related risks and challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the pandemic on food poverty and food security are covered elsewhere (4-7).

¹ ONS (2020) Consumer price inflation tables (online dataset). Accessed 29th September 2020. www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/datasets/consumerpriceinflation/current

2 Objectives

1. To determine the cost of a Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL) Healthy Food Basket for 2020 in Northern Ireland for 4 household types:
 - Two parents and two children (pre-school and primary school age)
 - Two parents and two children (primary and secondary school age)
 - One parent and two children (pre-school and primary school age)
 - Pensioner, female living alone
2. To present the cost of the minimum essential food basket as a percentage of household take-home income for low-income scenarios:
 - Household in receipt of social welfare payments
 - One adult employed and earning the National Living Wage (NLW)
 - In receipt of a state pension in the case of the pensioner
3. To provide a breakdown of the cost of the food basket by sub-category.

3 Methods

Cost of a minimum essential food basket

The cost of the food basket for each of the 4 household types was determined based on the cost of the basket first established in 2014 and 2016. The cost of the baskets first established for 2014 (1) and 2016 (2), were adjusted to 2020 prices using the appropriate Consumer Price Index (CPI) (four-digit level) classification, as published by the Office for National Statistics². The food basket is based on the final seven-day menus for each of the four households which are published in a separate document.

Cost of a minimum essential food basket by sub-category

The cost of the food basket is broken down by sub-category for each household, which allows an examination of the composition of the basket. For this purpose, the price of each item in the basket is adjusted at the granular level, using the most detailed Consumer Price Index classification available from 2014 to 2020 i.e., the COICOP (Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose) four-digit level classification. The school lunch and milk price were directly priced.

Cost of the minimum essential food basket as a proportion of household take-home income

The income scenarios presented for the households are hypothetical and are an example of the average net household income, “take home income”, for the scenarios considered. The scenarios are only a case in point to illustrate the food basket in relation to typical household income and should not be interpreted as a real case. The online calculator, www.entitledto.co.uk, was used to help generate the income scenarios. Income calculations are based on the current 2020/21 rates for the National Living Wage, personal taxation and State Benefits. The parameters for each scenario are listed below, details of the calculations are on page 16.

State Benefit Scenarios

These scenarios assume full entitlement to payments relevant to the household scenario:

Table 2: State benefit payments for household scenarios

² ONS (2020) Consumer price inflation tables (online dataset). Accessed 29th September 2020. www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/datasets/consumerpriceinflation/current

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Households with children	Jobseeker's Allowance, Child Tax Credit, Child Benefit, Housing Benefit (rates), Housing Benefit It is assumed the household is living in social housing. Housing Benefit is based on the average weekly rent charged by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (£66.60 per week). Assumed no savings, assets, or other incomes which will result in a reduced rate of means-tested payments.
Pensioner, Living Alone	Basic State Pension, Pension Credit, Winter Fuel Payment, Rates Relief Assumed no savings, assets, or incomes which will result in reduced rate of payment. Assume individual is of pension age, but under 80, and living alone. Assume the person owns their own home, is entitled to full basic pension rate, pension credit and rates relief. (Rates relief has been included as a component of household income in each iteration of this research, and for consistency is included in this edition. However, rates relief is not paid directly to the household but instead applied at source to reduce the rates bill, as such it is not a direct source of income.)

Employed Scenarios

Based on earning the National Living Wage rate, £8.72 (the statutory minimum wage payable to adults 25 and over (not to be confused with the voluntary 'Living Wage' for the UK).

- Two-parent households based on 1 adult in full-time (37.5 hours) employment.
- One-parent household based on adult in part-time (16 hours) employment. It is assumed the household is living in social housing.

Income is net household income, after Income Tax and National Insurance, and Universal Credit and Child Benefit.

The details of the calculations for each household type and each income scenario are represented in Appendix 1.

4 Results

Cost of a minimum essential food basket in 2020

The cost of the Minimum Essential Food Basket for four household types in Northern Ireland in 2020 is presented in Table 1.

- Between 2018 and 2020 the cost of food increased by an average of 1.4%. However, average food prices are 0.8% less in 2020 than in 2014 (when this piece of work was first completed).
- The average rate of change is based on the CPI sub-rate for 'Food', which reflects the change in the cost of the average food basket purchased across the UK.
- The cost of the minimum food basket has changed at a different rate than the average, increasing by more than 1.4% for all four household types examined.
- The minimum food basket for Northern Ireland represents a more limited basket than the average UK basket, and consequently changes in cost affect it differently.
- The differential in cost for a one parent and two parent household with a pre-school and primary school age child, is modest. This demonstrates the economy of scale available in the minimum food basket for a two adult household.
- Minimum food costs for a two parent household with a primary and second level age child are the most expensive, of the four household types. The cost is one third higher for this household type than a two parent household with a pre-school and primary school child.
- The female pensioner living alone is the smallest household composition examined and has the lowest minimum food cost. However, the food basket for this household type demonstrated the greatest rate of price increase, 1.9%, in the two-year period.

Food as a proportion of household income

The 2020 cost of a minimum essential food basket has increased from 2018. Incomes from State Benefits, National Living Wage employment and State Pension have also increased.

The degree of increase in the employed scenarios examined and for the State Pension is greater than the level of increase in food costs. However, the increase in State Benefits has not kept pace with changes in minimum food costs and as a result food costs represents a greater proportion of household income, compared to 2018, for the working-age household types reliant on State Benefits.

Table 1 summarises 2020 household income in illustrative scenarios of National Living Wage (NLW) employment and being dependent on State Benefits, for working-age households and scenarios based on the State Pension for pensioner households (for Income Calculations see Appendix 1).

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The cost of the minimum food basket represents a significant proportion of household income. However, the same minimum food cost represents a smaller proportion of household income when in employment (due to higher household income), compared to being dependent on State Benefits only.

State Benefits

- For working-age state benefit dependent households, meeting the cost of the minimum food basket would require 34–46% of household income.
- The ending of the ‘benefits freeze’ in 2020 (see page 5 of reference (8)) has resulted in a 1.2% increase in household income for the three households with children reliant on state benefits.
- The minimum food costs for households with children increased by an average of 1.5% from 2018–2020. Consequently, increases in food costs have outpaced the adjustment in State Benefits, and in 2020 a marginally larger (0.1 percentage point) proportion of income is needed to meet the cost of a minimum essential food basket.
- When dependent on state benefits, minimum food costs represent a third of household income for both the one parent and two parent household types with younger children, pre-school and primary school age.
- Food costs for the two parent household composition with an older child, demand the highest proportion of household income. Meeting the cost of a minimum essential food basket would require almost half (46%) of this household type’s state benefit income.
- A pensioner living alone would need to spend almost a third (31.9%) of household income to meet the cost of the minimum essential food basket. This represents a reduction in the proportion of income required for this household type (from 2018 to 2020) of 2.9 percentage points (in 2018 food costs amounted to 33.1% of income).

Employed

- For working-age employed households, the same minimum food basket represents a lower range of income: 24–32%, as income in the employed scenario is higher than when reliant on State Benefits only.
- Increases in the National Living Wage rate, Universal Credit, and the temporary Covid-19 related ‘uplift’ to the Universal Credit Standard Allowance³, resulted in a notable increase in net household income of 10–13%.

³ The £20 increase in the Universal Credit Standard Allowance is a temporary measure related to COVID and is in addition to the standard inflation related adjustment. For more detail see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-review-of-the-covid-19-temporary-measures/a-review-of-the-covid-19-temporary-measures-occasional-paper-24>

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- The changes in net household income, for the scenarios examined, exceeded increases in the cost of the minimum food basket and consequently there is a reduction in the proportion of income required to meet minimum food costs.
- Both household types with younger children, pre-school and primary school age, would need to spend a quarter (24.0-25.1%) of household income to afford the minimum essential food basket in 2020. This a decrease of 2 to 3 percentage points from 2018.
- The household type with an older child (two parents with a primary and secondary school age child) would need to spend almost a third (31.8%) of household income to afford the minimum essential food basket. This is a decrease of 2.8 percentage points from 2018.

Minimum essential food costs by sub-category

To provide further insight into the composition of the minimum essential food basket, and the factors influencing changes in minimum food costs, a breakdown of the basket by sub-category is examined, and the different rate of price changes is examined by sub-category. Table 3 presents the cost by sub-category in 2020⁴. The cost of food by sub-category for each of the households since 2014 is detailed in Appendix 2.

Proportional Make-Up of the Basket

- Meat takes the largest proportion of the minimum food cost, accounting for a quarter of costs for households with children and a fifth for the female pensioner living alone.
- For households with children, an average of two-thirds of the minimum food costs are on meat, fruit, vegetables, dairy products, and bread & cereals.
- Dairy products, 'milk, cheese and eggs', account for a larger proportion of the food budget for households with younger children, than the household with an older child or the pensioner household type.
- While meat represents the largest proportion of costs, fish accounts for only 3 – 4% of the minimum essential food basket, reflecting the preferences agreed upon in the focus group deliberations.
- School meals and milk account for a notable proportion of costs (12%) for the Two Parent household type with a primary and second level age child.

Social & Cultural Dimensions of Food

- 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 minimum essential food basket includes allocations which reflect the social cultural aspects

⁴ The breakdown of the baskets by sub-category presented in Table 2 enables examining the composition of the basket. In this section the price of each item in the basket is adjusted at the granular, using the most detailed CPI classification available from 2014 to 2020 (COICOP four-digit level classification).

of food, ensuring that households can participate in activities and practices considered a normal part of everyday life.

- Take-away food is included in the minimum food budget, with an allowance for one take-away a month. This makes up a small proportion of the cost, an average of 4% for households with children.
- Similarly, there is a modest provision made for alcohol (wine or beer), accounting for 6–7% of the minimum essential food budget.
- For the pensioner living alone, the social inclusion aspects of food comprise a larger proportion of the budget, as it was agreed that a person living alone should be able to host visitors and meet people for a meal out occasionally. Consequently, the pensioner budget includes both an allocation for having a meal out once a month, and a weekly budget of £10 for visitors. These comprise 24% of the minimum food costs.
- The category of school lunch and milk costs ranges from £6.26 to £19.99 which is 5 to 12% of the cost of basket. Included in this category is the cost of buying school milk each school day and buying a school lunch three times during the school week. The quantity of bought school lunches included in the basket was based on discussions with focus groups and their own habits regarding school lunches. There was a consensus amongst all of the family focus groups that the tendency for this household type is to have a mixture of homemade lunches and bought lunches, and this is reflected in the basket. However, it is important to note – and it was noted by the focus groups – that households are entitled to free school meals if the parent/guardian is in receipt of Income Support, Income-Based Jobseeker’s Allowance or Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance, or if the parent/guardian is in receipt of a Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit and has an annual taxable income of £16,190 or less⁵. This category is included to avoid the stigma that surrounds free school meals.
- The inclusion of alcohol, treats, a takeaway once a month, and providing for visitors highlights the social and cultural aspects of food. These items ensure that the minimum essential food basket is based on real-life experience and that while food is, of course, necessary for survival, there is also a social and cultural dimension to it as well.

Changing Costs

- The average change in food costs was 1.4%. Within this average change, some categories of food have increased in cost while others have declined.
- The range of items in the minimum food basket is more limited than the ‘average household’ basket used to measure inflation in the UK. As a result, the minimum basket does not always experience the same change in cost as the average basket.
- The minimum essential food budgets for the four household types increased by between 1.5% and 1.9% in the two-year period examined.

⁵ <https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants/eligibility>

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- The average cost of 'Mineral waters, soft drinks, etc.' increased significantly from 2018 to 2020, by 9.7%, due to the introduction of a Sugar Tax on soft drinks in the UK from 2018. This had a negligible impact on the final cost as they comprise a minor proportion (0-2%) of the MESL food basket for the four household types.
- Increases in the average cost of Bread and Cereals (4.3%), Meat (0.2%), Vegetables (1.8%) and Fruit (0.8%), all contributed to the increase in the cost of the minimum essential food basket.
- Increases in the average cost of take-away food (7.8%) and restaurants and cafes (5.7%), contributed to the pensioner living alone household type having the largest proportional increase in cost over the two-years.

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Table 3 Minimum Essential Food Basket by Sub-Category

	Two parents & two children pre-school & primary school		Two parents & two children primary & secondary school		One parent & two children pre-school & primary school		Pensioner, female living alone	
	Cost Per Week	Percent of Food MESL	Cost Per Week	Percent of Food MESL	Cost Per Week	Percent of Food MESL	Cost Per Week	Percent of Food MESL
Bread and cereals	£13.53	11%	£16.92	10%	£12.08	12%	£2.48	4%
Meat	£29.65	24%	£41.41	26%	£24.77	24%	£11.34	19%
Fish	£4.25	3%	£4.74	3%	£2.78	3%	£2.41	4%
Milk, cheese and eggs	£13.14	11%	£10.06	6%	£9.51	9%	£3.65	6%
Oils and fats	£1.71	1%	£3.80	2%	£2.70	3%	£0.54	1%
Fruit	£14.04	12%	£13.65	8%	£10.06	10%	£3.16	5%
Vegetables including potatoes and tubers	£13.61	11%	£17.83	11%	£12.24	12%	£9.24	15%
Sugar, jam and syrups	£0.49	0%	£0.95	1%	£1.20	1%	£0.00	0%
Food products not elsewhere classified	£1.22	1%	£3.19	2%	£3.48	3%	£1.86	3%
Coffee, tea and cocoa	£2.04	2%	£4.05	3%	£1.61	2%	£1.13	2%
Mineral waters, soft drinks and juices	£2.46	2%	£2.94	2%	£1.49	1%	£0.00	0%
Alcoholic Beverages	£8.62	7%	£10.47	6%	£6.28	6%	£4.05	7%
Take-away	£5.86	5%	£7.16	4%	£4.30	4%	£3.52	6%
Treats	£4.01	3%	£3.19	2%	£3.28	3%	£2.52	4%
School Lunch and Milk	£6.26	5%	£19.99	12%	£8.04	8%	£0.00	0%
Extra for Visitors	£0.00	0%	£0.00	0%	£0.00	0%	£10.20	17%
Extra for Christmas	£1.18	1%	£1.43	1%	£1.02	1%	£0.49	1%
Eating Out	£0.00	0%	£0.00	0%	£0.00	0%	£4.28	7%
TOTAL	£122.07	100%	£161.78	100%	£104.86	100%	£60.88	100%

5 References

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Calculations for each household type and each income scenario

Table 4: Household Income Calculations, Working-age families with children.

	Two Parents Pre-School & Primary	Two Parents Primary & Secondary	One Parent Pre-School & Primary
State Benefits			
Child Tax Credit	£119.33	£119.33	£119.33
Jobseeker's Allowance	£116.80	£116.80	£74.35
Child Benefit	£35.00	£35.00	£35.00
Housing Benefit (rates)	£16.85	£16.85	£16.85
Housing Benefit	£66.60	£66.60	£66.60
Household Income	£354.58	£354.58	£312.13
National Living Wage			
Gross Salary	£327.00	£327.00	£139.52
Income Tax	-£17.32	-£17.32	£0.00
National Insurance	-£17.28	-£17.28	£0.00
Net Earnings	£292.40	£292.40	£139.52
Universal Credit - Adult	£137.09	£137.09	£94.59
Universal Credit - Child	£119.33	£119.33	£119.33
Universal Credit - Housing	£66.60	£66.60	£66.60
Earnings Reduction	-£141.76	-£141.76	-£45.45
Universal Credit	£181.25	£181.25	£235.07
Child Benefit	£35.00	£35.00	£35.00
Rate Relief	£0.00	£0.00	£7.79
Household Income	£508.65	£508.65	£417.38

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Table 5: Household Income Calculations, Pension-age household type

	Pensioner Living alone
<hr/>	
State Pension	
<hr/>	
Basic State Pension	£134.25
Pension Credit	£39.50
Winter Fuel Payment	£3.84
Rates Relief	£13.48
Household Income	£191.07

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Appendix 2: Changes in cost of food by sub-category

Table 6 : Changes in cost of food by sub-category for household with two Parents and two children (pre-school and primary school)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bread and cereals	£12.85	£12.80	£12.55	£12.72	£12.97	£13.17	£13.53
Meat	£30.18	£30.01	£28.69	£28.69	£29.60	£29.07	£29.65
Fish	£3.95	£3.83	£3.63	£3.95	£4.10	£4.16	£4.25
Milk, cheese and eggs	£13.47	£13.08	£12.53	£12.64	£13.22	£12.97	£13.14
Oils and fats	£1.54	£1.48	£1.37	£1.59	£1.73	£1.69	£1.71
Fruit	£13.43	£13.05	£13.30	£13.47	£13.93	£13.79	£14.04
Vegetables	£13.52	£13.57	£13.01	£13.24	£13.36	£14.07	£13.61
Sugar, jam and syrups	£0.46	£0.46	£0.45	£0.46	£0.47	£0.47	£0.49
Food products nec	£1.19	£1.18	£1.18	£1.20	£1.21	£1.23	£1.22
Coffee, tea and cocoa	£1.89	£1.88	£1.89	£1.95	£2.04	£2.03	£2.04
Mineral waters, soft drinks, etc.	£2.27	£2.29	£2.26	£2.17	£2.25	£2.38	£2.46
Alcoholic Beverages	£8.49	£8.56	£8.23	£8.40	£8.46	£8.53	£8.62
Take-away	£5.00	£5.02	£5.11	£5.26	£5.44	£5.63	£5.86
Treats	£3.93	£3.89	£3.78	£3.84	£3.95	£3.97	£4.01
School Lunch and Milk	£5.83	£5.83	£6.05	£6.05	£6.26	£6.26	£6.26
Extra for Christmas	£1.15	£1.14	£1.11	£1.13	£1.16	£1.16	£1.18
TOTAL	£119.17	£118.09	£115.14	£116.75	£120.17	£120.59	£122.07

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Table 7: Changes in cost of food by sub-category for household with Two Parent & Two Child, Primary & Secondary School

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bread and cereals	£15.69	£15.91	£16.22	£16.48	£16.92
Meat	£40.06	£40.06	£41.34	£40.60	£41.41
Fish	£4.05	£4.40	£4.58	£4.64	£4.74
Milk, cheese and eggs	£9.59	£9.68	£10.12	£9.93	£10.06
Oils and fats	£3.05	£3.52	£3.84	£3.74	£3.80
Fruit	£12.93	£13.10	£13.54	£13.41	£13.65
Vegetables	£17.05	£17.35	£17.51	£18.44	£17.83
Sugar, jam and syrups	£0.89	£0.89	£0.92	£0.93	£0.95
Food products nec	£3.09	£3.14	£3.17	£3.21	£3.19
Coffee, tea and cocoa	£3.75	£3.88	£4.04	£4.02	£4.05
Mineral waters, soft drinks, etc.	£2.70	£2.58	£2.68	£2.84	£2.94
Alcoholic Beverages	£10.00	£10.20	£10.28	£10.36	£10.47
Take-away	£6.25	£6.43	£6.64	£6.88	£7.16
Treats	£3.00	£3.05	£3.14	£3.15	£3.19
School Lunch and Milk	£19.57	£19.57	£19.99	£19.99	£19.99
Extra for Christmas	£1.35	£1.37	£1.41	£1.42	£1.43
TOTAL	£153.00	£155.14	£159.44	£160.04	£161.78

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

Table 8: Changes in cost of food by sub-category for household with One Parent & Two Child, Pre-School & Primary School

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bread and cereals	£11.21	£11.36	£11.58	£11.76	£12.08
Meat	£23.96	£23.96	£24.73	£24.28	£24.77
Fish	£2.37	£2.58	£2.68	£2.72	£2.78
Milk, cheese and eggs	£9.06	£9.15	£9.57	£9.38	£9.51
Oils and fats	£2.17	£2.51	£2.73	£2.67	£2.70
Fruit	£9.53	£9.65	£9.98	£9.88	£10.06
Vegetables	£11.71	£11.92	£12.02	£12.66	£12.24
Sugar, jam and syrups	£1.12	£1.13	£1.17	£1.17	£1.20
Food products nec	£3.37	£3.43	£3.46	£3.51	£3.48
Coffee, tea and cocoa	£1.49	£1.54	£1.61	£1.60	£1.61
Mineral waters, soft drinks, etc.	£1.37	£1.31	£1.36	£1.44	£1.49
Alcoholic Beverages	£6.00	£6.12	£6.17	£6.22	£6.28
Take-away	£3.75	£3.86	£3.99	£4.13	£4.30
Treats	£3.09	£3.14	£3.24	£3.25	£3.28
School Lunch and Milk	£7.83	£7.83	£8.04	£8.04	£8.04
Extra for Christmas	£0.96	£0.98	£1.01	£1.01	£1.02
TOTAL	£99.00	£100.46	£103.33	£103.72	£104.86

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

Table 9: Changes in cost of food by sub-category for household of pensioner, female and living alone

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bread and cereals	£2.35	£2.35	£2.30	£2.33	£2.38	£2.41	£2.48
Meat	£11.55	£11.48	£10.98	£10.98	£11.33	£11.12	£11.34
Fish	£2.24	£2.17	£2.06	£2.24	£2.33	£2.36	£2.41
Milk, cheese and eggs	£3.74	£3.63	£3.48	£3.51	£3.67	£3.60	£3.65
Oils and fats	£0.49	£0.47	£0.44	£0.51	£0.55	£0.54	£0.54
Fruit	£3.02	£2.94	£2.99	£3.03	£3.13	£3.10	£3.16
Vegetables	£9.18	£9.21	£8.84	£8.99	£9.08	£9.56	£9.24
Sugar, jam and syrups	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Food products nec	£1.82	£1.80	£1.80	£1.83	£1.85	£1.87	£1.86
Coffee, tea and cocoa	£1.05	£1.04	£1.05	£1.08	£1.13	£1.13	£1.13
Mineral waters, soft drinks, etc.	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Alcoholic Beverages	£3.99	£4.02	£3.87	£3.95	£3.98	£4.01	£4.05
Take-away	£3.00	£3.01	£3.07	£3.16	£3.26	£3.38	£3.52
Treats	£2.47	£2.45	£2.38	£2.41	£2.49	£2.49	£2.52
Extra for Visitors	£10.00	£9.91	£9.61	£9.77	£10.06	£10.09	£10.20
Extra for Christmas	£0.48	£0.48	£0.46	£0.47	£0.48	£0.49	£0.49
Eating Out	£3.75	£3.76	£3.84	£3.94	£4.05	£4.16	£4.28
TOTAL	£59.13	£58.73	£57.14	£58.19	£59.76	£60.31	£60.88

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