

What is the cost of a healthy food basket in Northern Ireland in 2018?

Low-income households:

Eat less well



Higher level of diet-related disease



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

Realistic and acceptable

Nutritionally adequate

Household type

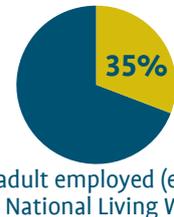
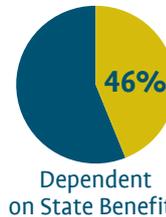
Total basket cost

% of take home income



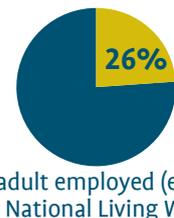
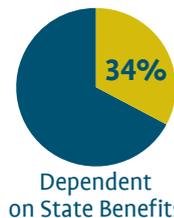
**Two-parent
Two-child**

Primary and secondary school



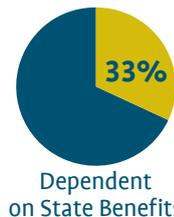
**Two-parent
Two-child**

Pre-school and primary school

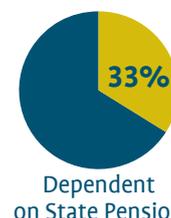


**One-parent
Two-child**

Pre-school and primary school



**Pensioner
Living alone**



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 2016 basket costs were updated for 2018 by applying the United Kingdom Consumer Price Index.

Result

Household type	Total basket cost			Income scenarios	Take home income	Proportion of take home income
	2016	2018	Change			
Two-parent, two-child (primary and secondary school)	£153	£159	4.2%	State benefits	£350	46%
				One adult employed earning the National Minimum Wage	£460	35%
One-parent, two-child (pre-school and primary School)	£115	£120	4.4%	State benefits	£350	34%
				Adult working and earning the National Minimum Wage	£460	26%
Two-parent, two-child (pre-school and primary school)	£99	£103	4.4%	State benefits	£308	33%
				One adult earning the National Minimum Wage	£369	28%
Pensioner living alone	£57	£60	4.6%	State pension	£180	33%

Key conclusions

- The cost of the MESL Food Basket increased by between 4.2% and 4.6% in the two year period 2016-2018 for the households investigated.
- 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. 1/3 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.

“You would be living on stuff that you wouldn't necessarily want to give the kids but it's the only way you can do it until you are stable again.”
(Two-parent household)

“Clothes, gas and electricity are quite high for somebody who is a single parent.”
(One-parent household)

“The first thing you do when someone comes to your house is offer them tea or coffee.”
(One-parent household)



To download a copy of the full report and infographic visit www.safefood.eu or www.food.gov.uk/northern-ireland