

# What is the Cost of a Healthy Food Basket in Northern Ireland in 2024?



## 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

## Cost of the basket per household: Amount (£) and percentage of income

| <br><b>Household type</b> | <br><b>Total basket cost per week</b> |  <b>% of take home income</b> |  |
|--|--|---|--|
|  |  | Dependent on State Benefits   | One adult employed (earning the National Minimum Wage) |
| <b>Two-parent, three-child</b><br>Pre, primary and secondary school  | <b>£276</b>  | <b>63%</b>  | <b>43%</b>   |
| <b>Two-parent, two-child</b><br>Pre-school and primary school  | <b>£212</b>  | <b>51%</b>  | <b>34%</b>   |
| <b>One-parent, two-child</b><br>Pre-school and primary school  | <b>£151</b>  | <b>41%</b>  | <b>31%</b>   |
| Dependent on State Pension   |  |   |  |
| <b>Pensioner living alone</b>  | <b>£71</b>   | <b>30%</b>  |  |

## Objectives

To estimate the cost of a Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL) Healthy Food Basket for 2024 and to present the cost as a proportion of take-home income for four household types in Northern Ireland.

## Methodology

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 2024.

## Results

### Cost of the basket per household: Amount (£) and percentage of income

| Household type  | Total basket cost 2024 | Income scenarios                        | Take home income | Proportion of take home income |
|---|------------------------|---|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Two-parent, three-child</b><br>(Pre, primary and secondary school) | <b>£276</b>            | State benefits                          | <b>£436</b>      | <b>63.3%</b>                   |
|   |                        | One adult earning national minimum wage | <b>£640</b>      | <b>43%</b>                     |
| <b>Two-parent, two-child</b><br>(Primary and secondary school)        | <b>£212</b>            | State benefits                          | <b>£420</b>      | <b>50.4%</b>                   |
|   |                        | One adult earning national minimum wage | <b>£623</b>      | <b>34%</b>                     |
| <b>One-parent, two-child</b><br>(Pre-school and primary school)       | <b>£151</b>            | State benefits                          | <b>£368</b>      | <b>41%</b>                     |
|   |                        | Adult earning national minimum wage     | <b>£488</b>      | <b>30.9%</b>                   |
| <b>Pensioner living alone</b>   | <b>£71</b>             | State pension                           | <b>£235</b>      | <b>30.2%</b>                   |

## Key Conclusions

- The food baskets contents have been rebased and repriced in 2024. As a result, they are not directly comparable to the 2022 baskets for assessing changes in cost. However, by adjusting the MESL NI baskets to reflect 2024 standards gives an estimated average increase of 21.0%.
- For working-age state benefit dependent households, meeting the cost of the minimum food basket would require 41 – 63% of household income.
- For households with children, an average of over two-thirds (64%) of the minimum food costs come from meat, fruit, vegetables, dairy products, bread and cereals.
- The cost of a minimum essential food basket for the four household types ranged from £71 to £276.

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