

Cost of a healthy food basket in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

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The cost of healthy food baskets in Northern Ireland

Minimum Essential Food Baskets - Two Studies

First Study (2014) – two household types:

- Two-parent, two-child (pre-school and primary school age) household type
- Pensioner, living alone household type

Second Study (2016) – two household types:

- Two-parent, two-child (primary and secondary school age) household type
- One-parent, two-child (pre-school and primary school age) household type

Minimum Essential Standard of Living



- Standard which no one should be expected to live below
- Emphasis is on needs & not wants
- Cost is based on actual price of detailed basket of over 2,000 goods & services

Minimum Essential Standard of Living

Two parts to the research:

1. **Expenditure** required for a Minimum Essential Standard of Living which meets physical, psychological and social needs.
2. **Proportion of income** needed to buy a Minimum Essential Food Basket

Low-income households:

**Eat less
well**



**Higher level of
diet-related disease**



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





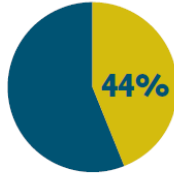
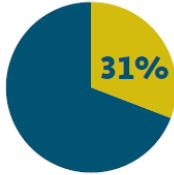


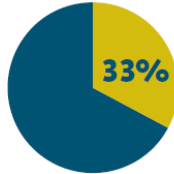
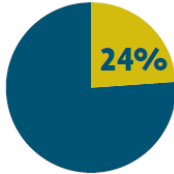


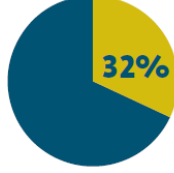
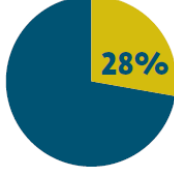


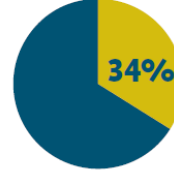
**Realistic and
acceptable**



**Nutritionally
adequate**

Establishing the Expenditure

- To establish the expenditure, focus groups are held for each household type.
- Negotiated consensus on goods & services to be included in the baskets (approx 2000 items).
- Experts are consulted in order to ensure that the negotiated consensus meets basic criteria e.g. nutritional standards.
- Focus is on **needs**, not wants.
- Seven day menu agreed
- Shopping basket for the menus costed

Household type	Total basket cost	% of take home income	
 Two-parent Two-child Primary and secondary school	 £153 Per week	 44% Dependent on State Benefits	 31% One adult employed (earning the National Minimum Wage)
 Two-parent Two-child Pre-school and primary school	 £115 Per week	 33% Dependent on State Benefits	 24% One adult employed (earning the National Minimum Wage)
 One-parent Two-child Pre-school and primary school	 £99 Per week	 32% Dependent on State Benefits	 28% Adult employed (earning the National Minimum Wage)
 Pensioner Living alone	 £57 Per week	 34% Dependent on State Pension	

Reflections From Focus Group Participants

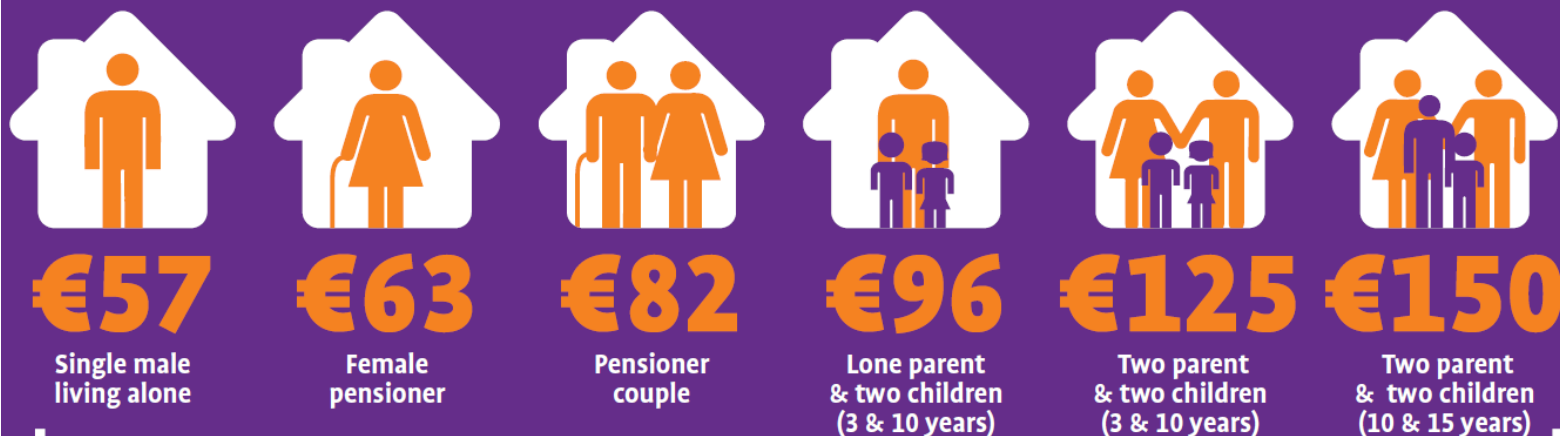
- *"You'd go anywhere to feed your children, if the price is right you would go."*
- *"You would be living on stuff that you wouldn't necessarily want to give the kids but it's the only way you can do it until you are stable again."*
- *"The first thing you do when someone comes to your house is offer them tea or coffee."*
- *"No extra for any luxury at any time of the year."*

Key conclusions

- Low-income households need to spend approximately one third of their take-home income to buy a minimum essential food basket.
- This research highlights the challenges when trying to balance buying this food basket with other weekly household expenses.
- The cost of the food basket depends on household composition; food for an adolescent is similar to that for an adult.
- Food is regarded as a flexible aspect of the household budget.
- The social and cultural aspects of food, such as spending on takeaways and extras visitors and Christmas, are an important part of the food basket.
- The 2016 weekly cost of the basket for a two-parent, two-child household (pre-school and primary school) is £115, £4 less than 2014.
- The 2016 weekly cost of the basket for a pensioner living alone is £57, £2 less than 2014.

The cost of healthy food baskets in the Republic of Ireland (2014)

Weekly average urban household spend on food



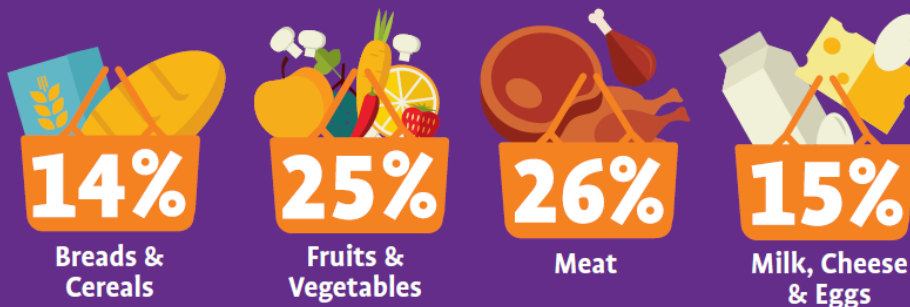
LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

WOULD HAVE TO SPEND

1/4 OF THEIR BUDGET

ON A HEALTHY FOOD BASKET

SPEND ON KEY FOOD CATEGORIES



The cost of healthy food baskets in the Republic of Ireland (2016)

Objectives

- 1 - To provide an updated cost (March 2016) for a minimum essential food basket for six household types in the Republic of Ireland (rural and urban), previously determined.
- 2 - To examine expenditure on food as a proportion of core minimum essential expenditure.
- 3 - To present the cost of a minimum essential food basket as a proportion of core minimum essential expenditure.
- 4 - To analyse food costs for children as part of a household.

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Thank you

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<http://www.safefood.eu/Publications/Research-reports/What-is-the-cost-of-a-healthy-food-basket-in-North.aspx>