



MINIMUM  
ESSENTIAL  
BUDGET  
STANDARDS

RESEARCH CENTRE

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# THE COST OF A HEALTHY FOOD BASKET

IRELAND, 2020

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# Outline

Fourth report in series since 2015

Examines cost of a minimum healthy food basket, using MESL data

- Six household types in Republic of Ireland
- Food as proportion of minimum living costs
- Food as proportion of income  
Social Welfare & National Minimum Wage

Complimentary series for Northern Ireland, examines four household types.



# MESL Research



Working with members of the public to identify the cost of a socially acceptable **Minimum Essential Standard of Living**.

- The minimum needed for people to live with dignity and participate in the day-to-day life of society
- Meets physical, psychological & social needs
- A level no-one should be expected to live below
- Deliberative Focus Groups, over multiple stages, work to agree what is needed to live at a minimum acceptable standard
- Counts the actual average weekly cost of the 2,000+ items needed to enable a socially acceptable minimum standard
- Evidence based benchmark of what is required to enable people to live with dignity, at a minimum but acceptable level

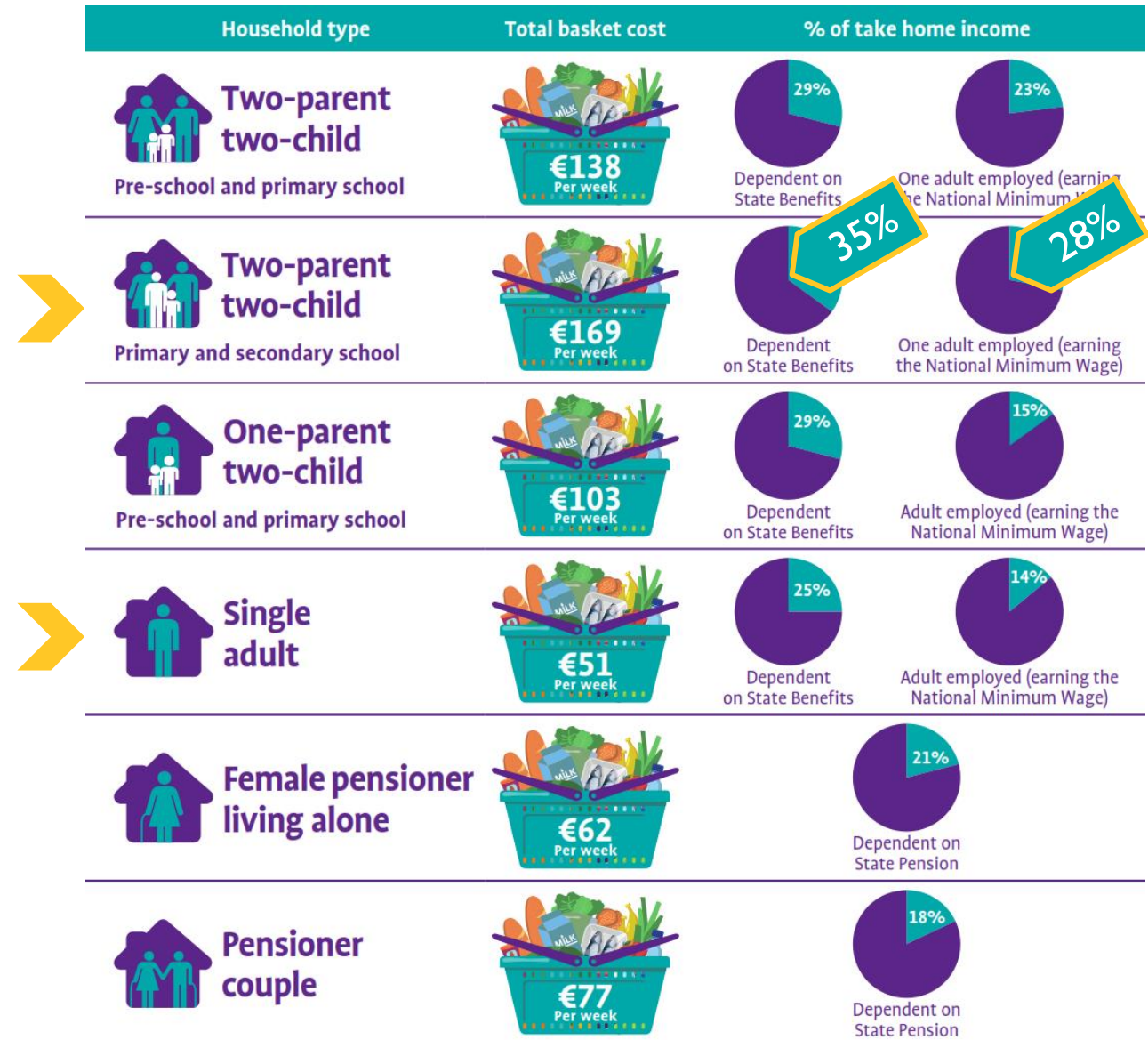
# Minimum Food Costs 2020

Food is amongst the largest areas of MESL expenditure for all household types examined.

Food basket cost varies with household composition.

- Food costs rise as children grow older
- Working-age single adult has lowest costs

Cost of the minimum food basket represents a significant proportion of household income



# Trends in findings

## OLDER CHILD



Child food costs highest for this age-group

44% higher than primary school age

## RURAL



The minimum food basket costs more in a rural area due to the need to use smaller local shops for perishables (bread & milk).

## SOCIAL ASPECTS



Social aspects of food are important for all household types. Especially for single person households (single working-age adult and pensioner living alone).

## TRADE OFFS



Inadequate income, below the MESL threshold, means households must choose which essentials to go without.