



Home Office

2024 Asylum Support Rate Review

Summer 2025



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Introduction

The Home Office has a legal obligation under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 to ensure that supported individuals can meet their essential living needs. We fulfil this obligation by providing accommodation and/or a weekly, per person, payment. The level of the payment is reviewed annually to ensure we continue to meet our legal obligations. Previous reviews can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk). The items that support rate payments are calculated to fund can be found at Annex A.

For the 2024 review, we have followed the same approach as the 2023 review. This involves:

1. Undertaking an engagement exercise with stakeholders, including NGOs, Local Authorities (LAs) and Strategic Migration Partners (SMPs), inviting them to share any views on the level of support rates.
2. Using the disaggregated Consumer Prices Index (CPI) with updated baseline food costs methodology to initially calculate the cost of essential needs.
3. Reviewing whether any adjustments need to be made to that figure, considering stakeholder engagement responses and our own research.

The outcomes of the review are as follows:

- The main rate of asylum support for individuals in self-catered accommodation is unchanged and remains at £49.18.
- The main rate of asylum support for individuals in catered accommodation is increased from £8.86 to £9.95.

These changes came into effect on 2nd June 2025. This report outlines how we arrived at these outcomes.

Stakeholder engagement

As part of the review process, an engagement exercise took place inviting comments and views from stakeholders, including NGOs and LAs (via SMPs). Sixty six responses were received and some of the key recommendations and suggestions were as follows:

- Rates should be set in line with 70% of Universal Credit (UC).
- Travel allowance should be increased, to enable greater access to meet social and cultural needs, with several requests to provide free travel to asylum seekers.
- Internet should be provided as an essential need, and communications payment should be given to those in catered accommodation.

We have previously responded to the recommendation to align rates with 70% of mainstream benefits and our position has not changed. The purpose of the asylum support is to ensure that individuals are not left destitute whilst their asylum claims, and any appeals, are under consideration. Universal Credit and other benefit payments are provided for different purposes and are intended to cover a broader range of costs. We also do not consider that the needs of an adult asylum seeker differ depending on whether they are over or under 25. UC is also generally uplifted in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) each year, which we have determined is not a wholly accurate way of amending asylum support rates.

The level of travel allowance currently provided, equivalent to one return bus journey a week, is deemed as sufficient in order to allow individuals to meet their essential living needs. Where an individual needs to make a higher number of essential journeys, for example regular medical appointments, where they cannot be met or funded by other sources, they can apply for additional support.

Internet access can be met in a number of ways, including at public libraries or by connecting to public wi-fi networks. Communication funds are not given to those in catered accommodation, as the means to communicate are provided to them directly as part of their accommodation.

Review

Overview

To determine the level of funds individuals require in order to meet their essential living needs, we have taken the same approach as the 2023 review¹, by firstly using the disaggregated CPI with updated baseline food costs methodology and then reviewing whether any adjustments need to be made to that figure, considering stakeholder engagement responses and our own research.

The disaggregated CPI with updated baseline food costs methodology was designed to offer a more accurate measure of changes in the price of items to cover essential living needs relative to CPI, since it only captures price changes of goods assessed as essential. For non-food categories of need, such as clothing or travel, the base rate was taken from the 2023 review, and sub-division CPI rates² (categories of goods reported as part of CPI, referred to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) as Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose(COICOP)), or bespoke categories using item-level data (e.g. bus fares), were used to identify price changes from 2023. For food and non-alcoholic drink, baseline food costs were determined using ONS's Living Costs and Food (LCF) survey, and a subcategory of CPI (food and non-alcoholic drinks) was used to uplift the base rate to September 2024 prices. Details on the data used and the caveats and limitations can be found at Annex B.

To ensure that our review captured factors which may not have been identified by the above methodology, we also utilised stakeholder feedback and our own research to consider whether any further adjustments needed to be made. This primarily involved considering whether essential needs had changed over the past year or considering whether there were any known upcoming changes which would impact a supported individual's ability to meet their essential living needs.

This section breaks down our findings for each category that make up the asylum support rates.

Food and non-alcoholic drinks

ONS data from the latest version of the Living Costs and Foods (LCF) survey is used to determine the cost of essential food and non-alcoholic drink needs and uplifted in line with food CPI inflation to bring it in line with September 2024 prices. The baseline figure used is

¹ [Report on review of weekly allowances paid to asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers: 2023 - GOV.UK](#)

² These refer to classification of individual consumption by purpose (COICOP) categories, as per the ONS's User guide to consumer trends: [User guide to consumer trends - Office for National Statistics](#)

the average weekly reported expenditure from the bottom quintile (20%) of households by disposable equivalised income, restricted to one adult non-retired households³.

This determines that the amount required to meet food and non-alcoholic drink essential need is £31.69 per week. This is a reduction of £3.17 from the 2023 provision for food of £34.86.

The reduction is due to the LCF survey findings not rising in line with food inflation, which was exceptionally high over the period between the 2022 and 2023 release of the data. It is difficult to say with certainty why this is the case, but it suggests households are either consuming less food, or where applicable, switching to lower cost or quality alternatives.

Food CPI inflation was 19% between March 2022 and 2023, but food expenditure for the bottom 20% of one adult non-retired households by disposable equivalised income increased by only 6% between FYE 2022 and FYE 2023 according to LCF survey data.

LCF expenditure survey data for FYE 2023 has been assessed as providing a better indication of essential food costs against compared survey data for FYE 2022. This is because food expenditure survey data for the bottom quintile of one adult non-retired households by disposable equivalised income for FYE 2023 is less likely to be distorted by the impact of coronavirus on household spending behaviour, and therefore more accurately reflects current consumer behaviour. As noted by the ONS for LCF FYE 2023, “the proportions of total expenditure spent on food and non-alcoholic drinks ... have returned to FYE 2020 pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels.”⁴

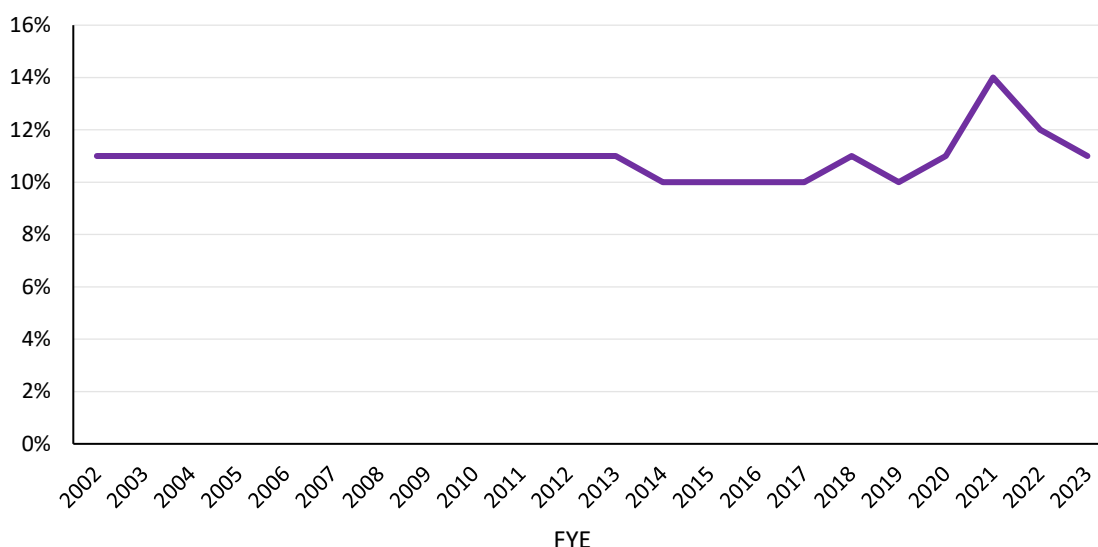
Between FYE 2002 and 2020, the average household consistently spent between 10% and 11% of total reported expenditure on food and non-alcoholic drinks. In FYE 2021, this was 14%, most likely explained by coronavirus distorting household spending, and 12% in FYE 2022 (suggesting this impact remained to some extent for this year). Food expenditure for FYE 2023 was 11%, reflecting a return towards pre-coronavirus pandemic expenditure in relative terms for the average UK household.⁵

³ Taken from FYE 2023 Table 3.3E: Expenditure of one adult non-retired households by disposable equivalised income quintile group (OECD-modified scale), found here: [Family spending workbook 2: expenditure by income - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴ [Family spending in the UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

⁵ Taken from FYE 2023 Table 4.1: Household expenditure as a percentage of total expenditure based on COICOP classification, 2001-02 to 2022-23 at 2022-23 prices, found here: [Family spending workbook 1: detailed expenditure and trends - Office for National Statistics](#)

Average weekly household expenditure on food and non alcoholic beverages as a percentage of total expenditure, from financial year ending (FYE) 2002 to FYE 2023



Source: Living Costs and Food Survey from the Office for National Statistics, taken from Figure 4 of Family Spending in the UK: April 2022 to March 2023.⁶

The reduction in real expenditure on food and non-alcoholic beverages for UK households between FYE 2022 and FYE 2023 is further driven by a real-terms reduction in total household expenditure. The average household saw a real-terms decrease of 4% in total expenditure in FYE 2023,⁷ likely explained in part by a reduction in real household disposable income.⁸ For the bottom 20% of one adult non-retired households by disposable equivalised income, total expenditure fell by 10% in real-terms.⁹

Acknowledging these reasons resulting in a reduction in food costs as part of the 2024 review, the Home Office is satisfied that expenditure for FYE 2023 for the bottom 20% of households by disposable equivalised income is the most appropriate way to determine costs required to meet essential food costs. We also undertook market research to assure the figure is enough for individuals to meet their essential food needs. Using a meal plan produced by the British Heart Foundation¹⁰ and market research, we calculated the cost of a weeks' worth of food for a single adult. This found that the food within the meal plan (i.e. the portion cost of the food, rather than the overall cost) cost less than the figure produced by the methodology of £31.69. This research can be found at Annex C. It is expected that

⁶ [Family spending in the UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

⁷ [Family spending in the UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

⁸ [Average household income, UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

⁹ Calculated using FYE 2023 and FYE 2022 Table 3.3E: Expenditure of one adult non-retired households by disposable equivalised income quintile group (OECD-modified scale), found here: [Family spending workbook 2: expenditure by income - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁰ [7 days of healthy meals on a budget - BHF](#)

some items can be found cheaper than our market research by shopping around allowing for further flexibility in the budget.

Clothing

COICOP CPI rates have been used to assess the change in the cost of clothing from September 2023 to September 2024. This results in the amount assessed to meet the clothing costs is £3.46 per person per week. The essential need is 'a reasonable basic wardrobe for the maintenance of health, decency and cleanliness'. We don't consider that what is required to meet that essential need has changed over the past year and therefore no further changes are required.

Communications

COICOP CPI rates have been used to assess the change in the cost of communications from September 2023 to September 2024 prices. This results in the amount assessed to meet communication costs is £4.21 per person per week.

Communications isn't an essential living need within itself, but it is accepted that it may be necessary in limited circumstances in order to meet other needs relating to maintaining interpersonal relationships and a minimum level of participation in social, cultural and religious life. We don't consider that what is required to meet that need in terms of communications has changed over the past year and therefore no further changes are required.

Travel

To assess the change in the costs of travel since September 2023, we have used an item-level approach to track changes in the price of bus fares to September 2024.

Whilst travel does exist as an individual COICOP of CPI, this is judged to be too general a measure to capture travel costs for section 95 recipients. This is because support payments are designed to cover the cost of at least one return bus fare a week, and the CPI COICOP captures a range of methods of transport which are not considered to be relevant to meeting the essential living needs of recipients (including air travel and private vehicle costs). This results in the amount assessed to meet communication costs is £5.13 per person, per week.

As with communications, travel isn't an essential living need within itself, but it is accepted that it may be necessary in limited circumstances in order to meet other needs relating to maintaining interpersonal relationships and a minimum level of participation in social, cultural and religious life. We do not consider that the provision of funds for at least 1 return bus journey per week needs to be increased in order for those needs to be met. However, the figure calculated by the disaggregated CPI methodology does not take into

account the increase in the bus fare cap from £2 to £3¹¹ for single bus fares which came into effect on 1 January 2025. Therefore, we deem it necessary for the allowance to be set at £6 for individuals to be able to afford 1 return bus journey per week.

Toiletries, laundry, and non-prescription medicines

To assess the change in the cost of toiletries and non-prescription medicines, a more granular method is also taken. CPI COICOPs are not adequately specific to capture toiletries, non-prescription medicines, and laundry/toilet paper categories of needs. Therefore, the items within these categories that have been assessed as essential needs have been mapped against item-level indices data, published by the ONS, to track changes in the price of these goods from September 2023 to September 2024. This results in the amount determined to meet toiletries, laundry and non-prescription medicines essential needs to be £1.86 a week. We do not consider any further adjustments are required in order for individuals to meet their essential needs in regard to these categories.

Results

The review concludes that the amount required to meet their essential living needs is £47.32 for individuals in self-catered accommodation and £9.95 for individuals in catered accommodation. A breakdown can be found below:

Asylum Support 2024 rate review findings – self-catered rate				
Category	Sep-23 price	Sep-24 price	Review adjustment	Total
Food and non-alcoholic drinks	£34.86	£31.69	n/a	£31.69
Clothing and footwear	£3.43	£3.46	n/a	£3.46
Communications	£4	£4.21	n/a	£4.21
Toiletries	£0.89	£0.92	n/a	£0.92
Non-prescription medicines	£0.47	£0.49	n/a	£0.49
Laundry/toilet paper	£0.57	£0.55	n/a	£0.55
Travel	£4.96	£5.13	+0.87	£6.00
Total	£49.18	£46.45	+£0.87	£47.32

Asylum Support 2024 rate review findings – catered rate

¹¹ [National bus fare cap - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Category	Sep-23 price	Sep-24 price	Review adjustment	Total
Clothing and footwear	£3.43	£3.46	n/a	£3.46
Non-prescription medicines	£0.47	£0.49	n/a	£0.49
Travel	£4.96	£5.13	+0.87	£6.00
Total	£8.86	£9.08	+£0.87	£9.95

As shown, the amount assessed as required for individuals in self-catered accommodation to meet their essential living needs is lower than the support rate introduced following the 2023 review. Therefore, no changes are required for the self-catered rate to enable individuals living in self-catered accommodation to meet their essential living needs. However, the amount assessed as required for individuals in catered accommodation to meet their essential living needs has increased. Therefore, the catered support rate increased from £8.86 to £9.95.

Families and children

In catered accommodation, provisions “in kind” are in place for some of the additional needs that families may have. For example, formula milk, nappies and toiletries are provided to those in catered accommodation. For those in self-catered accommodation, children receive the full rate of asylum support which is calculated for an average single adult. Many essential requirements for adults (for example the need to communicate with friends and families overseas) do not apply in equal measure to their children, particularly if they are very young. In addition, families are likely to benefit from the availability of economies of scale that mean other costs per person in the household fall. For these reasons, any extra costs in some households of meeting particular needs (e.g. clothes for teenagers, cleaning products etc) are comfortably offset by applying a flat rate per person per household.

Exceptional needs

The asylum support rates are calculated for the average able bodied adult asylum seeker. Where individuals can show they have exceptional needs in order to be able to meet their essential needs, they can apply for additional funds.

Annex A: Essential needs

The following list contains the essential needs items that the 2024 weekly subsistence payments was calculated for. The items below are per annum unless stated otherwise. Assumptions regarding the items can be found in reports on gov.uk.

Food and non-alcoholic drinks (self-catered rates only)

The Home Office uses ONS data (LCF survey¹²) to determine the subsistence level needed to buy sufficient food to live healthily.

Toiletries and laundry (self-catered rates only)

- Toothpaste x 4
- Toothbrushes x 4
- Soap x 4
- Shampoo x 4
- Shower gel x 4
- Deodorant x 6
- Toilet roll x 52
- Washing powder x 13
- Packs of tampons x 15 **or** male shaving items (disposable razors x 52, shaving soap x 4).
- Nail clippers x 1

Non-prescription medicines

- Paracetamol x 3 packs
- Ibuprofen x 3 packs
- Pack of indigestion tablets x 1
- Cough linctus x 1
- Box of hot drink sachets x 2
- Nasal inhaler x 2
- Box of cold and flu capsules x 2
- Pack of plasters x 1

Clothing and footwear

- Underpants x 3
- Sock/tights x 3
- Vests/bras x 2
- Tops or shirts x 2
- Trousers or skirts x 2
- Cardigans/jumpers/sweatshirts x 2
- Coat x 1
- Pairs of shoes x 2
- Nightwear x 1
- Hat, Gloves and Scarf x 1

Travel

- Weekly return bus journey x 1

Communications (self-catered rates only)

- Notepad and pens x 4
- Basic phone x 1
- Sim x 1
- Pay as you go top ups x 12
- International calls (£10 a quarter) x 4

¹² [Family spending in the UK Statistical bulletins - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Annex B: Disaggregated CPI and updated baseline food cost methodology caveats and assumptions

Caveats and assumptions – disaggregated CPI:

The key caveats and assumptions associated with the methodology and figures relating to changes in the price of essential goods are outlined below. **These relate specifically to changes in the baseline price of goods and services.** Disaggregated CPI as a methodology therefore does not include the reassessment of baseline food costs - caveats and assumptions relating to this are separately provided below. Additionally, these do not relate to items that have been added to the list of essential goods following the market research conducted as part of the 2024 review, since the prices of these goods are already given in prices correct as of September 2024.

- This method is used on the basis that essential living costs only change because of changes in the prices of these goods, and that levels of consumption needed to meet essential living needs remain to be the same.
- For COICOP CPI rates (food, clothing and communications), this methodology has been developed on the basis that recipients of asylum support have the same experience of price changes across the given categories of need as the average UK household in relative terms when calculating any uplift in baseline prices.¹³ This means no adjustment is made for characteristics specific to this group beyond the initial base rates, and the appropriate weighting of each category when calculating the total payment. There is no available robust data currently available to refine this assumption.
- The ONS has published some experimental analysis tracking the price of the lowest-cost grocery items.¹⁴ This shows that CPI sub-division for food and non-alcoholic beverages was broadly representative of price changes across the lowest-price items within 30 everyday grocery items across the period covered in the analysis (April 2021 to September 2022). This suggests that the inability to adjust for income decile in the CPI sub-division data has a limited impact on results.
- However, it is unknown whether more significant relative differences may emerge in the future, and there is some evidence which has identified differences in food inflation across income deciles in the past (due to differences in specific food and drink goods and/or types bought depending on income decile).¹⁵ While the

¹³ 'Relative terms' here means the same percentage change in prices. Since each category of need is calculated separately, differences in the appropriate weighting of different categories are already accounted for in the analysis.

¹⁴ [Tracking the price of the lowest-cost grocery items, UK, experimental analysis - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/priceindex/articles/trackingthepriceofthelowestcostgroceryitemsuk/experimentalanalysis)

¹⁵ See Section 7 of: [Final Report Defra December 2021.pdf \(bournemouth.ac.uk\)](https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/research/defra-final-report)

experimental statistics published by the ONS are not as robust as official statistics, if this is a frequently updated publication, it may be more appropriate to pivot towards this data in the future. Additionally, the ONS has committed to changes in measuring the changing prices and costs faced by households to account for differences in income levels,¹⁶ so further alternative data may be available in the future.

- COICOP CPI data are classified as National Statistics, meaning they are assessed as fully compliant with the Code of Practice for Statistics (that is, they meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value).
- The bespoke baskets (toiletries, non-prescription medicines, laundry/toilet paper, and bus fares) use item-level data published by the ONS¹⁷. While these items are constituent parts of the overall CPI basket of goods, item-level indices are less robust due to much smaller sample sizes. Item-level data are not classified as National Statistics, and there are fewer statistical processes in place to control for issues such as volatility. However, this method uses the best available data, and only accounts for around 15% of total costs.¹⁸
- There is a risk that specific items included in the bespoke measures are removed from the CPI basket of goods following the annual review of CPI shopping baskets, which occurs every January. If any of the items used in this measure were removed, it would not be possible to update changes in the price of these, since item-level data is sourced directly from CPI publications. The risk of this is likely to be relatively low, since the goods captured are deemed to be essential. However, there are instances whereby specific items are not included in the CPI basket at the time of writing, meaning the closest available items have been used as proxies to capture price changes.¹⁹

Caveats and assumptions – baseline food costs:

The **Living Costs and Food (LCF) survey data**, published as part of Family Spending in the UK data release, **are classified as National Statistics**. This has been used to estimate essential food and non-alcoholic beverage costs, by taking the average reported expenditure for one-adult non-retired households for the lowest 20% of households by disposable equivalised income in FYE 2023. Therefore, this methodology has been developed that this reflects essential food costs for non-catered section 95 recipients, recognising the key caveats and assumptions below:

- Estimates provided by LCF survey data are subject to the general limitations associated with survey research, such as sampling error. However, Family Spending in the UK are Official Accredited Statistics, so these risks are mitigated by

¹⁶ [Measuring the changing prices and costs faced by households | National Statistical \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/methods/measuring-the-changing-prices-and-costs-faced-by-households)

¹⁷ [Consumer price inflation item indices and price quotes - Office for National Statistics](https://ons.gov.uk/consumer-price-inflation/item-indices-and-price-quotes)

¹⁸ Based on current proportions, before market research adjustments made as part of the 2024 review. This could change in the future if consumption behaviour changes relative to the 2020 baselining exercise, or if relative inflation rates across categories of need significantly diverge.

¹⁹ These are: sanitary towels are used in the absence of tampons from March 2023 onwards only; household scissors are used in the absence of nail clippers; washing liquid is used in the absence of washing powder.

the ONS as far as possible, in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics. The Living Cost and Food Survey technical report²⁰ provides further information on the strengths and limitations of the LCF survey data, including methodological techniques to ensure the survey data is representative of the UK as a whole as far as possible.

- Table 14 in the technical report data table provides standard errors and confidence intervals for categories of goods. While these relate to average household expenditure, rather than the specific group used to inform baseline food costs, the percentage standard error²¹ for food and non-alcoholic drinks was 0.9% for FYE 2023 (the lowest of any category reported).²²
- Using updated one-adult non-retired households reported food expenditure for the lowest 20% of households LCF data to inform baseline food costs means the methodology is sensitive to income or wealth effects impacting the expenditure of this population over time. In the absence of a specific basket of goods applicable to recipients, or anchoring baseline food costs to a specific year of LCF costs, it is not possible to mitigate this risk.
- Food and non-alcoholic beverage expenditure is reported in the LCF does not include any food consumption from non-shop-bought food. The 2023 review provides justification for the exclusion of any adjustments to reflect expenditure on meals eaten out, or takeaways.

The Home Office has engaged with the ONS in developing this methodology.

²⁰ [Living Costs and Food Survey technical report - Office for National Statistics](#)

²¹ 'Standard error' is a statistic that is used to measure how accurately sample data represents the whole population.

²² [Living Costs and Food Survey: technical report data tables - Office for National Statistics](#)

Annex C: Food assurance market research

Example Meal Plan:

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
Monday	Porridge with skimmed milk and sliced banana	Lentil and vegetable soup; two slices of wholemeal bread with spread	Jacket potato with sardines in tomato sauce and peas	Two satsumas; one apple; small handful of unsalted peanuts; fat-free Greek yogurt
Tuesday	Wholegrain toast with spread, boiled egg, and sliced tomato	Carrot and parsnip soup; two slices of wholemeal bread with spread	Chunky vegetable and bean goulash with brown rice and broccoli	Three oatcakes with low-fat cream cheese or quark; one pear
Wednesday	No-added-sugar muesli with skimmed milk and sliced banana	Jacket potato with reduced-sugar-and-salt baked beans; portion of salad	Beetroot barley risotto with peas	One carrot (cut into sticks); small handful of unsalted peanuts; two satsumas
Thursday	Wholegrain toast with spread, sliced/mashed banana, and fat-free yogurt	Egg, tomato, and cucumber sandwich (wholemeal bread)	Wholewheat spaghetti with sardines, cherry tomatoes, and salad	Two plums; two oatcakes with spread; one pear
Friday	No-added-sugar muesli with skimmed milk and a banana	Cheese salad sandwich with reduced-fat Cheddar, salad, and wholegrain bread	Mushroom and cauliflower frittata with peas and carrots (or other surplus vegetables)	Two plums; two oatcakes with spread; one pear
Saturday	Porridge with skimmed milk and one banana	Vegetable soup (tinned or homemade)	Tuna and sweetcorn pasta bake with cauliflower and broccoli	Small handful of unsalted peanuts; one apple; one pear

Sunday	Poached egg with cooked mushrooms and two slices of wholemeal bread	Chicken and vegetable traybake; baked apple with spiced sultanas and low-fat custard	Chicken sandwiches with cucumber and tomato (wholemeal bread, using lunchtime leftovers)	Small handful of unsalted peanuts; one carrot (cut into sticks); two satsumas
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Sources: [7 days of healthy meals on a budget - BHF](#).

Example Shopping List

The below costs have been calculated to purchase the ingredients for the meal plan above. Our cost calculations are based on per portion for ingredients. Market research was conducted in January 2025. The total cost of the basket is also below.

Shop	Weekly Portion Cost	Basket Cost
Tesco	£28.14	£42.32
Sainsburys	£28.32	£41.41
Asda	£26.12	£39.64
Average	£27.53	£41.12

