

Tackling soaring food prices

People are going through the worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation. Energy costs are up, mortgage bills are up, rent is up. But one of the biggest contributors to the crisis is food.

The **cost of the weekly shop has soared** over the last twelve months, now costing families an extra £600 a year.

The price of essential foods that we all use every day has gone through the roof. Cheese is up by 50%; milk by 40%; and eggs by 30%.

People are really struggling just to afford the basics.

And despite this, the **Conservative Government has done absolutely nothing to help**. It's no wonder that on their watch the UK's food inflation has hit 20%, the highest it's been since the 1970s.

Hard-working families shouldn't have to worry about putting food on the table. **People deserve a fair deal**. That's why we've set out a five-point plan to bring down food bills:



1. Invest an extra billion pounds in British farms, to boost food production

We should be supporting our farmers to boost the UK's environmentally-friendly and sustainable food supply.

Starting by targeting support at shortage areas, we can protect ourselves from import shocks, put more good-quality food on the shelves, and bring down prices for the long term.



2. Cut energy bills for farms and businesses

Last month, the Government cut energy support for businesses by 85%, forcing farmers and shops to raise their prices. We'd put the support back up, to cut costs for producers and retailers.

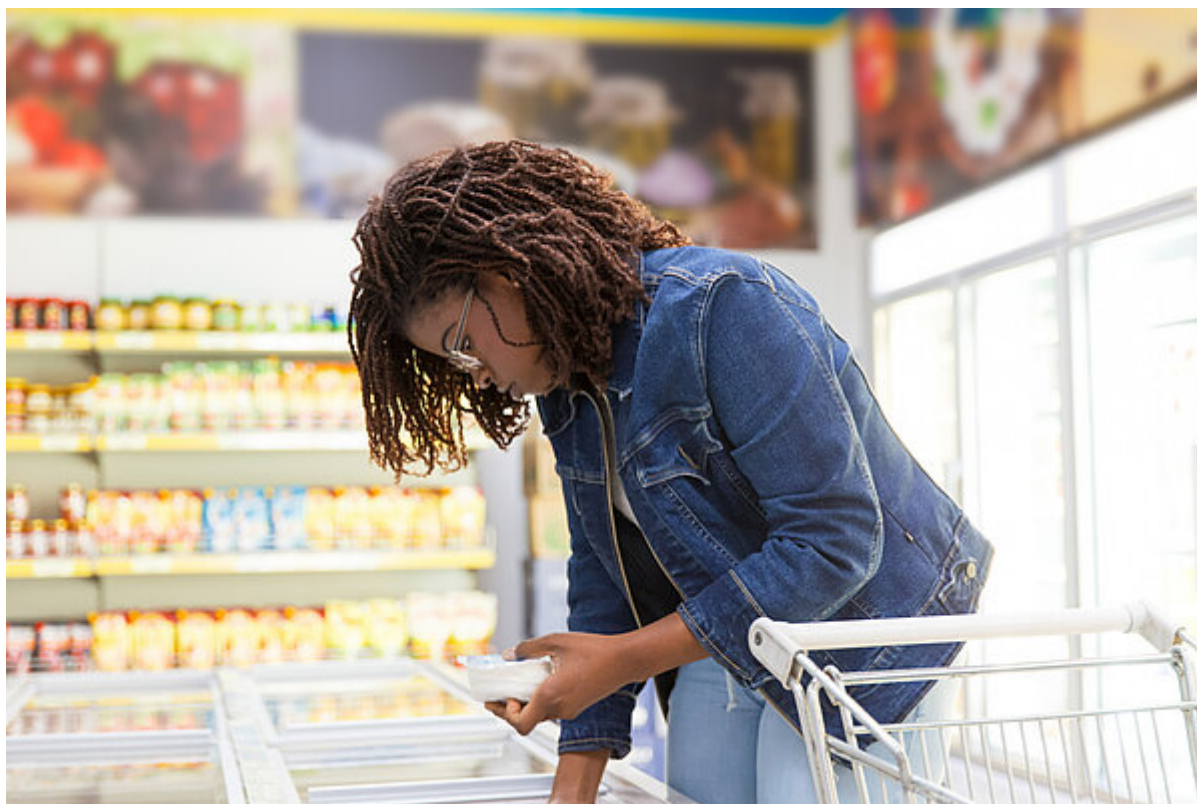
And in the meantime, the Government should ensure that energy-intensive farms, such as those producing poultry, pig, dairy and fruit and vegetables, qualify for extra support under the current scheme.



3. Let our farmers and fishers recruit the staff they need

The Government's unfair visa rules have left our farmers and fishers producing less food because they can't recruit enough workers. Tonnes of fruit and veg went to waste last year as a result.

The Government must fix its broken visa system which is holding back our food supply, by scrapping arbitrary salary thresholds.



4. Investigate profiteering by big food corporations and supermarkets

A handful of big corporations control huge parts of our food and grocery markets, and there's alarming evidence they could be unfairly raising their prices at consumers' expense.

The Government must order an investigation by the market competition watchdog – the CMA – and crack down on profiteering. And they should give the Groceries Code Adjudicator more power to protect farmers from big supermarkets, keeping prices lower.



5. Free school meals for every child in poverty

Unfair rules put in place by the Conservatives in 2018 have excluded 800,000 children growing up in poverty from Free School Meals. And another 200,000 eligible children are missing out because they're not registered.

The Government must immediately end this injustice by scrapping the arbitrary household income threshold, and automatically enrolling every eligible child.

British people are struggling with eye-watering food prices and yet this Government is refusing to help. The Conservative Party is so out of touch they might as well be on a different planet.

It's the **Liberal Democrats** who have put forward a proper plan to make food **cheaper**. Now ministers need to stop sitting on their hands and put it into action.

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[**Chalk streams hit by 14,000 hours of**](#)

sewage discharges last year

England's chalk streams are a source of great national pride. Chalk streams are a unique waterway found primarily in the South of England and Yorkshire. They have been referred to as "England's rainforest" for their special qualities which allow wildlife and plants to thrive. They are a haven for iconic species like the otter, kingfisher and salmon amongst many others.

Today's new analysis of Environment Agency data finds they are being polluted with endless amounts of sewage discharges.

This truly is scandalous. Chalk streams must be protected from these destructive sewage dumps."

Ed Davey

The worst offender is Wessex Water, guilty of 1,013 separate sewage discharges into chalk streams across the West of England.

The worst chalk stream sewage discharge lasted a staggering 2,969 hours in the River Till, a tributary of the Hampshire Avon in Wiltshire by Wessex Water, which is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest as it is home to the Water Crowfoot, providing habitat for fish and snails.

Meanwhile, Thames Water discharged sewage into the Misbourne in Buckinghamshire for 1,206 hours last year. Southern Water discharged sewage 62 times in the River Meon last year, lasting over 1,000 hours.

The figure for sewage discharges may be much higher than feared. The Liberal Democrats have uncovered a large number of monitors designed to measure sewage overflows are in fact broken. **One in five sewage discharges in chalk streams either had a faulty monitor or no monitor installed at all.** Shockingly, one in four of Yorkshire Water's sewage monitors setup in chalk streams was recorded as broken last year. Across the country, one in ten chalk stream sewage monitors were faulty last year according to Environment Agency data.

Stop Sewage Dumping

Tax water companies' huge profits and fix our sewage system.

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