## Nutrition policy status in Northern Ireland

NOURISHING policy index May 2023

This country snapshot presents detailed results of the **NOURISHING policy index** [1] for Northern Ireland. It highlights strengths and weaknesses in the design of national government nutrition policies. This snapshot supplements the policy index results with an in-depth look at the quality of policy design in each country. Full policy index results are outlined in the NOURISHING policy brief, which compares Northern Ireland to 29 other European countries.

## Main messages

- 1 Northern Ireland implements national government policy actions in nine out of the ten policy areas of the NOURISHING framework. Three policy areas received a good assessment: limits or removal of specific nutrients in food products (I1), increasing awareness on food and nutrition through communication campaigns and social marketing based on food-based dietary guidelines (I2), and giving nutrition education and skills (G).
- 2 Within policy areas, weaknesses and gap were identified, for example, in the design of fruit and vegetable initiatives in schools and lack of measures on food and drink available in the immediate vicinity of schools impacted otherwise well-designed standards on food in schools (O). Similarly, gaps were identified with regards to unhealthy food advertising for young people through product design and packaging, point of sale measures, and in/around schools (R). Finally, current policy actions at national level to ensure coherence between food systems and health (H) can be strengthened.
- **3** No action was taken at national government level in nutrition advice and counselling in health care settings (N2); therefore, this policy area should be prioritised. Greater attention should be given to setting rules and incentives to create a healthy retail and food service environment (S).

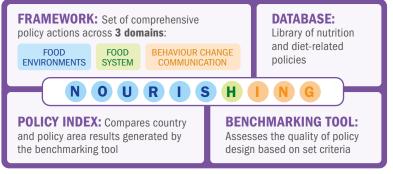
Overview of policy status NO POLICIES IDENTIFIED POOR FAIR MODERATE	GOOD EXCELLENT	
Nutrition label standards and regulations on the use of claims and implied claims on food	MODERATE	
Offer healthy food and set standards in public institutions and other specific settings	MODERATE	
Use economic tools to address food affordability and purchase incentives	MODERATE	
R Restrict food advertising and other forms of commercial promotion	FAIR	
Improve nutritional quality of the whole food supply	GOOD	
S Set incentives and rules to create a healthy retail and food service environment	POOR	
Harness supply chain and actions across sectors to ensure coherence with health	FAIR	
Inform people about food and nutrition through public awareness	GOOD	
Nutrition advice and counselling in healthcare settings	NO POLICIES IDENTIFIED	
G Give nutrition education and skills	GOOD	

This snapshot is based on national level policies only, which include UK-wide and Northern Ireland-only policies issued by the UK government. Policies issued by provincial, regional or local governments are outside the scope of this project. Page 2 highlights which policy areas assess UK-wide or home nation policies.

## Methods

The NOURISHING policy index methods are fully explained in the associated **policy brief**. In short, the policy index combines values for a) policy presence, and b) policy design for 41 benchmarks.

The benchmarks are applied to policies in the **NOURISHING database** [2], collected through a comprehensive scan in 30 European countries, including Northern Ireland.



Policy tools used to produce the policy index results

\* Policy actions assessed include UK-wide policies

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Break	down of policy index results	(For ful	l details o	n the policy design criteria, consult the policy	brief)	
×	No policy identified			Meets up to 75% of policy design criteria		
	Meets up to 25% of policy design criteria		Meets up to 99% of policy design criteria			
	Meets up to 50% of policy design crite	ria		Meets all aspirational standards		
	1					
	Nutrients on back of pack*	back of pack*		Planning restrictions regarding food service outlets around schools	×	
	Front of pack labels*		S	Planning restrictions on food service outlets	×	
N	Warning labels	X		Initiatives to increase the availability		
	Rules on nutrient claims			of healthier food in stores and food service outlets		
	Rules on health claims   Food and drink available in schools,		Measures to support food producers to increase healthy food and decrease			
	including restrictions on unhealthy foods			unhealthy food in the supply chain		
	Measures relating to sugar-sweetened beverage provision in schools		Measures to support food manufacturers to increase healthy food and decrease			
0	Fruit and vegetables initiatives in schools			unhealthy food in the supply chain Measures to support food retailers		
	Food and drink available in immediate vicinity of schools	×	× • • ×	to increase healthy food and decrease unhealthy food in the supply chain		
	Unhealthy food in out-of-education locations			Governance structures for multi- sectoral/stakeholder engagement*		
	Health-related food taxes or tariffs			Nutrition standards for public		
	Income related subsidies or initiatives to increase affordability and accessibility of healthy food	×		Supporting urban agriculture in health and planning policies	×	
	Targeted subsidies or initiatives to			Community food production	X	
	increase affordability and accessibility of healthy food			Development and communication of food-based dietary guidelines		
	Marketing to young people through advertising*	$\bigcirc$		Public awareness, mass media and		
R Marketing people Marketing of sale mea Marketing product pla Marketing	Direct marketing to young people*			informational campaigns and social marketing on healthy eating*		
	Marketing through sponsorship to young people		Nutrition advice and counselling in primary care	×		
	Marketing to young people through point of sale measures	×		Nutrition advice and counselling in school healthcare setting	×	
	Marketing to young people through product placement and branding*			Nutrition education in curricula		
	Marketing to young people through	×		Training for educators		
	product design and packaging		C	Training for health professionals	X	
	Marketing in/or around schools			Cooking skills		
	Limit or removal of specific nutrients in food products*			Training in schools in growing food		
				Training for caterers	$\bigcirc$	

Note: The policy landscape in any country evolves over time. These findings reflect our knowledge as of May 2023. To see latest results and for further technical information on the policy indexes, please consult our website: wcrf.org/our-policy-work. For feedback or suggested updates, please email **policy@wcrf.org**. More info in the CO-CREATE project can be found at **co-create.eu** 

[1] Policy index: wcrf.org/nutrition-policy-index [2] Policy database: policydatabase.wcrf.org





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