

## Our Right to Food: What is available in this family's kitchen?

Before the Community Advisors began thinking about what the family would eat each week, we needed to know what kitchen equipment they would have available. Each group was asked to imagine what would be available to a family of this size if we were living in a Good Food Nation.

We referred to this list in the discussions, for example to help decide whether the family would have a freezer to keep leftovers or a slow cooker to make a stew on a busy day.

Kitchen Equipment <sup>1</sup>	Browns	Robinsons	Harris McGregors	MacDougalls
Cooker, fridge freezer, kettle, toaster	☑	☑	☑	☑
Saucepans, frying pan, baking trays, casserole dish	☑	☑	☑	☑
Knife set, utensil set, corkscrew, cheese grater	⊖ No corkscrew	☑	⊖ Only knife set	☑
Mixing bowls, jug, sieve, scales, chopping boards	⊖ No jug	☑	⊖ Only sieve	☑
Oven gloves, tea towels, plastic storage tubs	⊖ No oven gloves	⊖ No oven gloves	⊖ Only tea towels	⊖ No oven gloves
Clingfilm, tin foil, bin	⊖	☑	⊖	☑
Additions from the group discussion	Microwave, Slow cooker, Coffee maker	Microwave, Slow cooker, Chip pan, Crockery	Microwave, Hand blender, Toastie machine, Bottle opener, Crockery, Sandwich bags	Microwave, Hand blender, Coffee maker

☑ Mentioned by group

⊖ Group decided on some but not all

⊖ Not mentioned by group

<sup>1</sup> Each group compared the items they mentioned to a list of 'key items included in all household budgets' determined by the Minimum Income Standard project. Some of the items were considered 'nice to haves' rather than essentials, but the chart reflects each group's conversations about what families of this size should be able to afford. See Davis et al (2015) [How much is enough? Reaching social consensus on minimum household needs](#), p 68

## Background

As part of the Minimum Income Standard (MIS) approach, the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University has established a list of kitchen equipment items that groups of ordinary people in the UK consider necessary for households if they are to reach an acceptable living standard in the UK. Davis et al (2015:42) explain that "These are regarded as basics appropriate for a modern home, and to have to go without them would be considered to be living at a standard that was below what was socially acceptable."

## Community Advisor reflections

Some kitchen items (slow cooker, hand blender) were added to the Minimum Income Standard (2015) list due to their importance in keeping a family kitchen running throughout a busy week. Slow cookers were added for both large families as they were seen as a 'relaxing' way for a busy family to prepare a meal, even on a day when there are different activities to get out to:

[Cooking for a family can be] pretty stressful. And either she needs to know what she's making, and she's maybe thrown it in the slow cooker... maybe on a heavy activity night, maybe she's put stuff in the slow cooker before she's gone to work.  
(Group 3)

For the single mum with two young children, a hand blender and microwave were considered essential to help her prepare and reheat children's meals. One group also suggested that a toastie maker would be helpful for this family size.

There was some disagreement between group members about whether a mum with a young child would need a strong blender to purée baby foods:

She's definitely got a blender. She's probably got a couple of blenders, probably a hand blender and a glass-jar blender because she's got two young children. So, they were babies quite recently. She's probably making baby food, puréeing stuff. I say that because that's what I'm doing right now.

[...]

I think it would just be a hand blender, because you actually buy them for as cheap as £6 now. Just speaking personally, I think. I fed my son, and I didn't use a big flashy glass blender. I just had a £4.99 hand blender out of ASDA. (Group 4)

The group did not come to an agreement about the need for a glass hand blender, and future work could explore whether basic kitchen equipment for making baby food was considered essential for parents with younger children.