



# The Good Food Bill: Fixing Food for Good

Preventing the next cost-of-living crisis

March 2026



## Executive Summary

This briefing sets out the case for a Good Food Bill as a necessary statutory framework that can reorient the UK's food system and provide certainty for citizens, farmers, growers, businesses and investors alike. Recent global shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine resulted in significant price shocks, exposed the vulnerability of our food system and had a lasting impact on food prices and food insecurity. When coupled with growing risks to our food supply from climate change, cyberthreats and escalating geopolitical conflict, it is clear that urgent action is required to protect our food supply and prevent the repeat of past failures.

Legislation to transform our food system could serve to secure a resilient domestic supply of nutritious food produced in ways that support environmental sustainability and better protect against shocks, while also reshaping England's food supply and food environment so that affordable, nutritious, and sustainably produced food becomes the default and most accessible choice for everyone. These objectives would help prevent future cost-of-living crises driven by food price shocks, while supporting economic growth, public health and food security.

A Good Food Bill that includes statutory targets, a reference diet to guide policy development, Good Food Action Plans, ministerial duties, local plans and independent oversight would provide a much-needed framework to transform the UK's food system.

Without decisive action, food prices are likely to remain volatile, the UK will remain reliant on imports and exposed to external shocks, farmers and growers will remain economically vulnerable, and children's health will continue to decline.

The next food shock is not a question of if, but when. This briefing presents the case for a Good Food Bill to prevent repeating past failures and to protect the resilience of the UK food system in the future.

## Introduction

**An increasing number of parents are skipping meals so their children can be fed. British growers are going out of business at an alarming rate. The NHS is struggling with the sheer amount of avoidable disease. These are not individual failures. These are policy failures.**

Our current food system is failing households, farmers and the economy, with serious consequences for health, food security and resilience. The British public have endured two significant food price shocks in recent years due to Covid-19 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Global instability is not receding. The impact of climate change on food production is intensifying; water scarcity threatens major growing regions; there is an escalating risk of cyber-threats across the food system and concentrated trade through a handful of chokepoints exposes the food system to geopolitical risk. With conflict erupting in the Middle East, a third shock feels almost certain.

As domestic production of fruit and vegetables has declined, import dependency has increased, leaving us more vulnerable to each geopolitical and climate shock. The UK imports 40% of all its food ([Defra, 2024](#)), and up to 78% of its fruit and vegetables ([Scheelbeek et al., 2020](#), [UK Health Security, 2023](#)), and is thus heavily exposed every time a shock occurs.

We often hear that food security is a matter of national security, and that is true. But it is also a matter of social justice. The price always comes home – paid at the checkout and felt most acutely by the households with the least to spare.

As prices have rocketed, families, particularly those on the lowest incomes, face a prolonged cost-of-living crisis and have been priced out of the food they need to stay healthy. As diets have worsened, the NHS has struggled under the pressure of widespread preventable disease – disease which is both curtailing lives and keeping people out of work unnecessarily.

The UK government cannot fully control international wars, global pandemics, or increasingly extreme weather events. But it can control our resilience in the face of such events.

New legislation is necessary to reorient our food system, giving successive governments clear goals to ensure the country is well-nourished in an increasingly uncertain world. It's needed to provide food businesses, farmers, and growers with the confidence they need to operate in the most sustainable and beneficial way possible, and investors the certainty required to provide much needed capital for the industry's growth and profitability. To fail to act now, when the warning signs are so clear, would be a failure of foresight.

This briefing sets out a proposed framework for a Good Food Bill. It is not intended as a final blueprint, but it presents the core levers that need to be pulled to transform our food system. The precise shape of a Good Food Bill and the precise details of any targets, its duties and its mechanisms should be informed by the expertise, experience, and insight of those closest to the challenge: farmers and growers, local authorities, public health professionals and the NHS, food businesses, and the communities most affected by the impacts of the food system.

What is agreed is the urgent need to act. A statutory framework for food is the foundation on which success depends. The time to fix our food system for good is now. The real victory in a crisis is not just solving today's problem, but preventing tomorrow's.

### **The state of our food system:**

The legacy of past shocks continues...

Food insecurity remains significantly elevated, with 12% of households still struggling to afford or access adequate food, rising to 15% amongst households with children ([Food Foundation, 2026a](#)).

Similarly, whilst food inflation has come down since the peak in March 2023, it remains persistently above overall inflation ([Food Foundation, 2026b](#)).

The cost of a basic, nutritionally adequate shopping basket has increased by 33% in the last four years (The [Food Foundation, 2026b](#)).

Meanwhile, British growers continue to go out of business: domestic fruit and vegetable production has fallen 16% since 2015 ([IGD, 2025a](#)). The UK produces only 17% of fruit and 55% of vegetables consumed ([Defra, 2024](#)).

**...And without a decisive change in direction, this is all set to get worse.**

## **Why is Legislation necessary to transform UK food policy?**

### **Regulatory certainty and investor signal**

Legislation transforms government intent into credible, bankable commitment. Businesses, investors, and producers currently struggle to plan and invest appropriately for food policy commitments precisely because they have seen policies abandoned, watered down, or reversed when political priorities shift. A statutory framework changes this calculus. It enables businesses to plan and allocate funds and resources over the long-term for shifting operations in accordance with new regulatory requirements, investing in reformulation, supply chain transformation, and new product development, with confidence that the policy environment will endure. Clear policy and legal requirements also provide investors with the confidence they need to provide much-needed capital for the industry's growth and profitability. With the right support and incentives, farmers can commit to transitioning to sustainable production without fear that supporting programmes will be cut after the next election. Capital follows certainty – and only legislation provides it.

### **Sets a direction successive governments must follow**

England's Fuel Poverty Regulations 2014 show what statutory direction delivers. Before them, efforts to improve energy efficiency in low-income homes were patchy and slow – voluntary, discretionary, and vulnerable to being quietly deprioritised. The regulations imposed a legal duty to ensure fuel-poor homes reached minimum energy efficiency standards by 2030. That single change transformed the policy landscape: it forced coordinated national action, gave local authorities and housing providers a clear obligation to plan against, and made the commitment credible enough to attract sustained investment. A statutory framework for food would do the same, embedding direction into law so that successive governments inherit clear obligations rather than starting from scratch, and so that progress compounds across parliaments rather than resetting with each one.

### **Urgency and pace – farmers and children can't wait**

Even where statutory measures in food have eventually been introduced, the pace has been wholly inadequate. In the past decade, governments introduced just three major policies to improve children's diets. These measures took four to eight years to progress from commitment to implementation, largely because tackling childhood obesity was not given sufficient priority and was repeatedly slowed by political inconsistency and industry lobbying. In the case of the advertising regulations for instance, even following consultation and primary legislation, there were multiple delays over 3 years. During that period, children's dietary health worsened and obesity reached record levels. Voluntary approaches compound this problem – the Public Health Responsibility Deal and the voluntary sugar reduction programme both produced slow, inconsistent, and ultimately reversible progress. By contrast, the Soft Drinks Industry Levy drove rapid, large-scale reformulation precisely because it was statutory. Without a legal framework, ambition remains aspiration. With it, change becomes obligation.

### **Why a Good Food Bill?**

Britain has had no shortage of food strategies, reviews, and commitments. What it has lacked is a durable framework that ties them together, ensures they are delivered, and survives changes in government. A Good Food Bill would provide that statutory framework – building on existing work and giving it legal force, coherence, and longevity, while providing the long-term stability and certainty called for by businesses and investors. This was a specific recommendation of Henry Dimbleby's National Food Strategy published in 2021. Specifically, a Good Food Bill would reshape the food system to secure a domestic supply of nutritious food that is resilient to shocks, and ensure that affordable, healthy, and sustainable food is accessible for everyone.

These objectives would deliver the food strategy outcomes set out in the government's Good Food Cycle ([Defra, 2025](#)) and create the conditions for long-term action, establishing a legacy that ensures the failures exposed by the cost-of-living crisis are never repeated.

The two objectives are complementary. One addresses how that food is produced and how secure that supply is. The other addresses the food on offer and whether people can access and afford healthy diets. Together they cover the full arc of the food system, from farm to fork, and together they are how we can prevent another cost-of-living crisis and start to protect everyone from these shocks, rather than continue to leave them exposed.

### **Objective 1: To secure a resilient domestic supply of nutritious food produced in ways that support environmental sustainability, so that farmers and growers, businesses, investors and consumers can all cope better with shocks.**

The recent global shocks have exposed the fragility of our food system. The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent recovery, which created a huge surge in energy prices and, in turn, food prices, revealing the energy intensity of agricultural production and transportation. Then in 2022, Russia's invasion of Ukraine cut off wheat and sunflower oil supplies worldwide, sending food inflation to a 45-year high of 19.1% by March 2023 ([ONS, 2023](#)). The invasion had multifaceted impacts on our food system, from direct impact on food supplies, to driving up the cost of energy and fertiliser and disrupting key trade 'chokepoints' (see further [Chatham House, 2023](#)). On top of all this, climate change has continued to wreak havoc bringing extreme weather events which reduce crop yields and make harvests less predictable.

According to the ONS, countries with stronger domestic production, like Spain and Italy, experienced lower food price inflation during the recent cost-of-living crisis ([ONS, 2023](#)). However, domestic fruit and vegetable production in the UK has collapsed by 600,000 tonnes since 2015 ([IGD, 2025a](#)) and at least half of our imported fruit and vegetables come from countries facing extreme water scarcity ([Defra, 2024](#)). Global supply is also under pressure: world production of fruit, vegetables and nuts needs to rise by 63% to meet recommended levels of consumption ([Rockstrom et al., 2025](#)). It is clear more needs to be done to build our resilience, particularly protecting our fruit and vegetable supply.

A Good Food Bill will build on, rather than replace, existing commitments to secure a resilient domestic supply of nutritious foods:

- The planned work for a horticulture sector plan would provide a foundation; the Bill would strengthen and embed it in our future system.
- Local food plans would become a new feature of our system, connecting national ambition for greater resilience with stronger regional production and supply chain capacity.

Central to this objective would be escalator targets for national production of fruit, vegetables, and beans and other legumes, progressively raising the floor of domestic supply so that resilience is built incrementally but irreversibly. This could be good for growth too. Research from Green Alliance estimates that this alone would add £2.3 billion to the UK economy, with another £3.3 billion on top if the UK's self-sufficiency in fruit and vegetables grew proportionally by 10% ([Green Alliance, 2025](#)).

It would also pave the way for new policies which are likely to become essential:

- Procurement standards that enable more sourcing of quality, domestic produce;
- Core environmental standards for trade which maintain British standards of production in our imported food ([WWF 2022a](#) & [2022b](#));
- Stronger country of origin labelling rules ([Farming Profitability Review, 2025](#)); and
- Supply chain fairness measures ([EFRA Committee, 2025](#)).

**Objective 2: To reshape England's food supply and food environment so that affordable, nutritious, and sustainably produced food becomes the default and most accessible choice for everyone.**

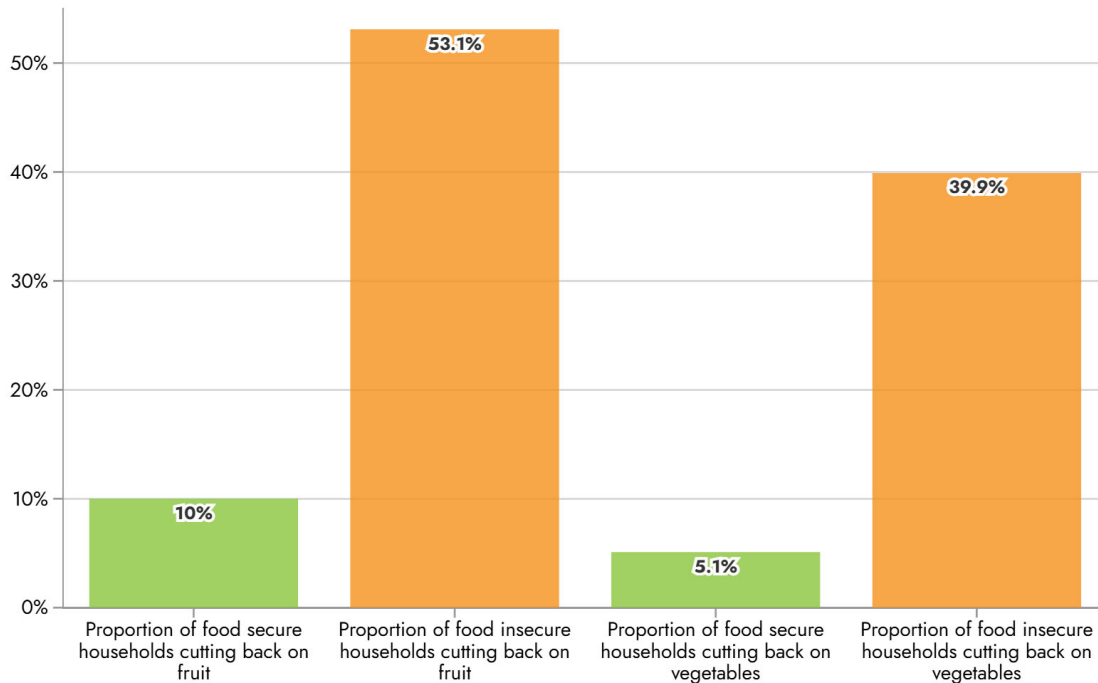
The human cost of previous food price spikes was severe and is still widely felt across society. Families who had never struggled before found themselves unable to afford basic groceries, with parents skipping meals so their children could eat and pensioners choosing between heating and eating. Food bank usage surged to record levels, with close to three million emergency food parcels distributed in a single year ([Trussell, 2025](#)).

Healthier food now costs more than twice as much per calorie as less healthy options, and their prices are rising at twice the rate, putting a healthy diet further out of reach for those who need it most (The Food Foundation, 2025). For the poorest households, buying a week's worth of fruit and vegetables would consume up to 52% of one person's entire weekly food budget (The Food Foundation, 2024). The result is that 53% of food-insecure households were cutting back on fruit and 40% on vegetables in January this year ([The Food Foundation, 2026](#)).



## Half of food insecure families are cutting back on fruit & vegetables

Percentage of households reporting cutting back on purchases:



The damage went beyond hunger: childhood obesity remains high, with over a third of children now leaving primary school with excess weight ([National Child Measurement Programme, 2024-5](#)). Poor diets beginning in childhood lead to cumulative health problems among working age adults too, affecting the productivity of the workforce; a recent IPPR report directly linked high levels of obesity to high rates of economic inactivity due to long-term sickness, with an estimated 2.2 million people per month facing a negative impact on their work performance due to obesity. This is placing a growing strain on the NHS and the wider economy ([IPPR, 2024](#)). It is estimated that obesity and excess weight cost the NHS around £12 billion per year, with the total impact of these conditions on the economy and wider society in the UK equivalent to £126 billion ([Nesta, 2025](#)).

Here too a Good Food Bill would not start from scratch. It would build directly on existing government commitments to improve the healthiness of food on offer, such as the Healthy Food Standard (mandatory business reporting and targets announced in the NHS ten year plan) and new School Food Standards, creating the conditions for them to be built on in the future. For instance, mandatory business reporting on the healthiness of food sales, along with clear goals for our food system agreed in a Bill, would inform future policy design, based on where progress is lagging. Similarly, the goals could guide future updates and strengthening of School Food Standards, standards for baby foods and early years settings, policies on food labelling and more.

By linking our existing standards for businesses to clear goals for diets and our food system, the Bill ensures that progress is consistent and coherent.

## What should be in the Good Food Bill?

A Good Food Bill would establish the legal framework needed to address long-standing policy gaps and overcome barriers that have hindered progress. The Bill should include:

### Statutory Targets: creating urgency and defending against delay

The current system means there is no legal obligation for the government to act. Childhood obesity targets exist on paper but have no force. Indeed, in 2018 the government set a target to halve childhood obesity by 2030. Today, childhood obesity is higher than in 2018 ([DHSC, 2025](#)). Government can ignore the targets, delay action, or abandon them entirely.

The Bill should set three legally binding targets:

- Reduction in childhood obesity, and reducing the gap between the richest and poorest children – by 2050
- Increase in the national average consumption of fruit and vegetables among children and an increase in the proportion of the fruit and vegetable supply which is produced in Britain – by 2040
- Reduction in household food insecurity as measured by the Family Resources Survey – by 2035

These targets would have legal force. Governments would have to act to meet them, could be challenged if they did not, and couldn't abandon them when political winds shift. Having legal targets provides the basis for government to hold the line when facing any push back from wider food system stakeholders. Should a new government consider scrapping existing policies, the statutory obligation would help prevent it.

### How could achieving the proposed targets help the NHS?

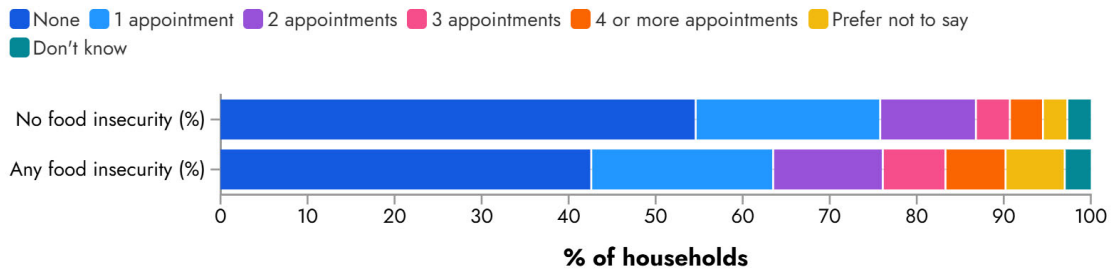
**Reducing obesity:** Halving the rate of obesity would reduce the cost of diet-related ill health to the NHS and social care services by £5.3bn per year, which translates to an average of £136 per taxpayer per year ([Green Alliance, 2026](#)).

**Increasing consumption of fruit and vegetables:** Increasing the amount of fruit and vegetables we eat to the recommended 5-a-day could save the NHS £706 million annually ([Pinho-Gomes, et al., 2021](#)).

**Reducing food insecurity:** reducing food insecurity can boost health and reduce GP visits. Food insecure households are nearly twice as likely to report having 3+ GP appointments a month than food secure households([Food Foundation, 2026](#)).



## Food insecurity is correlated with more GP appointments



Number of self-reported household GP appointments in the past month



### A Reference Diet: ending policy incoherence

Currently, different parts of government define a healthy diet differently, and there is no official definition of a sustainable diet. While we have a policy definition of unhealthy products, we have no definition of healthy products. School Food Standards use one framework, advertising and promotions restrictions have another, as does NHS dietary advice, labelling another, while planning policy, agricultural payments and trade rules ignore nutrition entirely. The result is policy that works at cross-purposes.

The Bill should require government to publish a single, evidence-based Reference Diet which would provide a framework that defines what nutritious, affordable, and sustainable eating looks like. This is not about telling people what to eat. It is about ensuring government policy is coherent and aligned: that school meals, hospital food, food industry restrictions, and public sector procurement all work toward the same nutritional goals, and that agricultural policy supports farmers and growers to produce the food we actually need people to eat. When decisions are made about what food to serve in schools or what sectors of farming to support, there would be a clear, authoritative standard to work from. This is common sense, and the principle behind the [FAO's](#) food-based dietary guidelines, which are recommended to be used to underpin food, nutrition and agricultural policies and programmes. Indeed, it is also how the [US Dietary Guidelines](#) are used – updated every five years and used to inform food programmes, such as school food.

### Public Health and Environmental Gains from Dietary Change

The layering of policies over time that enable people to shift towards healthier diets would deliver not only major public health benefits but also significant environmental gains. The global modelling of the Planetary Health Diet, for example, demonstrates that what we eat shapes far more than health outcomes: dietary patterns also drive land use, greenhouse-gas emissions, water use and biodiversity loss. It shows that global adoption of this diet could reduce agricultural nitrogen use by around 45%, in turn reducing the exposure of our food costs to the cost of the energy used to make fertiliser ([Rockstrom et al., 2025](#)). Given that around 30% of the world's fertiliser trade passes through the Strait of Hormuz which is currently closed by the Middle East War, the cost of fertiliser is currently set to make a major impact on food prices.

### **Good Food Action Plans: turning targets into delivery**

Targets without delivery mechanisms remain aspirations. The Bill should require government to publish a comprehensive Good Food Action Plan every five years, showing exactly how it will progress towards the legal targets: which policies will be deployed, which departments are responsible, and how progress will be measured.

This is what drives action. It forces government to think systematically about the full range of policy levers from planning rules that enable farm shops to become established, to advertising restrictions that reduce junk food marketing, to procurement standards that support regional food economies. It prevents the current pattern where ambitions are announced but without a clear plan for delivery.

### **Ministerial Duties: making food policy everyone's responsibility**

Food policy currently sits in silos. While the Department for Health and Social Care has some regulatory powers, particularly related to the sales and advertising of unhealthy food, they have limited influence over what food is actually produced or how affordable it is. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs supports farmers and growers, but production decisions aren't connected to public health priorities. The Department for Education oversees school meals, but procurement is not covered by DEFRA's policy. Trade policy can undermine domestic production and environmental commitments, and planning decisions affect farm viability, yet nobody is responsible for ensuring these policies work together rather than at cross-purposes.

The Bill would create a legal duty for ministers to consider the statutory targets when making decisions in areas that affect food – health, food insecurity, education, agriculture, planning, and trade. It ensures government works as a system, not a collection of competing priorities.

### **Food in Local Plans: Enabling community-led action**

National policy sets direction, but local authorities are on the frontline: planning food infrastructure, supporting local food businesses and responding to food insecurity. Currently, whether a council prioritises food depends entirely on local political will. Some do excellent work; some do very little.

The Bill should place a statutory duty on councils to “have regard to” food, making it a procedural duty that requires local authorities to actively consider food-system impacts when making decisions, and to be able to demonstrate that they have done so. In practice, this means embedding food considerations into core governance processes, including committee reports, plan-making, budget and investment decisions, and risk and resilience planning, rather than confining them to a stand-alone strategy. This does not impose top-down solutions but rather, it ensures every community has a strategy.

### **Independent Oversight: ensuring delivery and accountability**

Without independent monitoring, commitments fade into inaction. The Bill would require the Food Standards Agency to report regularly to Parliament on whether government is delivering its action plan, consulting with the Climate Change Committee, the Office for Environmental Protection, the National Protective Security Authority and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities.

This creates accountability. Civil society, the media, the public, and Parliament can see whether government is on track or falling behind. When policies are delayed or weakened, independent experts will say so publicly.

### **How could a Good Food Bill help protect against another cost-of-living crisis?**

**Targets:** A food insecurity target places the affordability of food at the heart of the legal framework, ensuring that the cost of eating well is not treated as an afterthought but as a measure against which every government is judged.

**Reference diet:** Because the Reference Diet defines what affordable eating looks like alongside nutritious and sustainable eating, it would also expose – and require government to address – the growing gap between what a healthy diet costs and what the poorest households can actually spend.

**Good Food Action Plans:** Each Action Plan would also have to set out how government intends to address food affordability, ensuring that the policies it deploys do not simply improve the food available but make it affordable to the households that need it most.

**Ministerial duties:** Ministers currently escape any duty to consider household food costs when taking decisions that affect the price people pay for food, for instance in trade and planning decisions.

**Local food plans:** Local food plans would also require councils to consider food affordability in their area, linking planning, procurement, and economic development to the practical question of whether residents can afford to eat well.

**Independent oversight:** This reporting would include whether food is becoming more or less affordable for low-income households, making the cost of eating well a matter of public record and parliamentary scrutiny, not something that only surfaces during a crisis.

***Together, these elements solve the core barriers to progress – statutory targets overcome political short-termism; the Reference Diet ends policy incoherence; action plans turn ambition into delivery; ministerial duties break down silos; local plans enable community action that builds resilience; independent oversight ensures accountability. This is not bureaucracy for its own sake. It is the infrastructure needed to make progress inevitable rather than dependent on political will.***

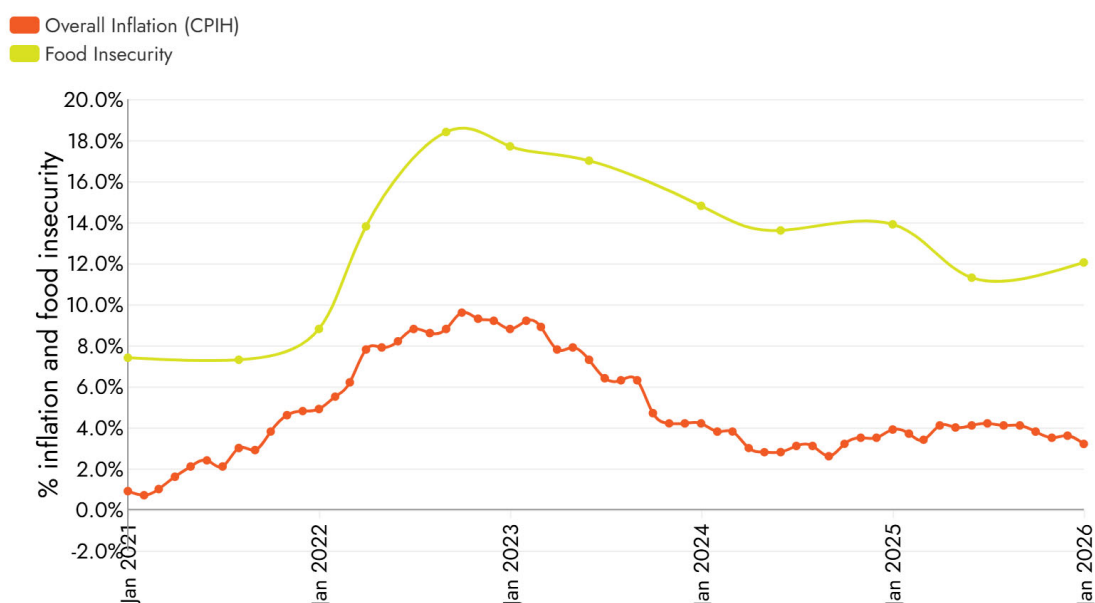
## What are the consequences of inaction?

Without legislation to create a statutory framework for food policy, the current trajectory is clear – food price shocks will keep hitting households, pushing people further and further towards cheap, highly processed food; children’s health will worsen; our dependency on imports will deepen; and more British farmers and growers will be driven out of business. It is those on the lowest incomes who will suffer the most.

**Food prices will continue to rise and become increasingly volatile:** Although food inflation has declined since the peak in March 2023, it remains persistently higher than overall inflation ([The Food Foundation, 2026](#)). Higher inflation during 2022/23 was associated with higher levels of food insecurity, highlighting that rising living costs have a stark impact on the ability of households to afford food ([The Food Foundation, 2026](#)).

### Inflation and its correlation with food insecurity in the UK

CPIH inflation and self-reported household food insecurity in the UK



Source: ONS, Consumer price inflation tables, Food Foundation food insecurity tracker · Inflation is UK monthly CPIH annual inflation rates (12-month rate). Food insecurity is % of households in UK that are food insecure



Climate-driven extreme weather accounted for around one-third of food inflation in 2023, adding an estimated £361 to the average household food bill ([ECIU, 2023](#)). Without action, climate change will continue to drive price volatility and rising costs for households. Modelling the future impact of heatwaves alone on food prices, the Autonomy Institute projects food inflation could increase by 10% by 2035 and 34% by 2050 ([The Autonomy Institute, 2025](#)). This could mean a UK household spending up to £1247 more on food in 2050 compared to 2024 ([The Autonomy Institute, 2025](#)).

**The UK will become dangerously dependent on food imports:** Domestic fruit and vegetable production will continue its decline, making us ever more reliant on climate-vulnerable regions for basic nutrition. In fact, current projections show UK food production overall could fall by 7-32% by 2050 ([APPG on Science and Technology in Agriculture 2025](#)). Just as decades of underinvestment means water bills will be increased by 36% over the next five years to pay for

new water infrastructure ([Ofwat, 2025](#)), failure to invest in our food infrastructure and domestic horticulture will be a missed opportunity to grow one of our important industries – food – and leave families paying the price for neglect.

**Our fruit and vegetable supply will remain at particularly high risk:** The UK's reliance on imported fruit and vegetables, over and above any other food group, poses a particular risk to the population's health. The UK imports of fruit and vegetables are up to 78% of total supply ([UK Health Security, 2023](#)). In 2013, 32% of UK fruit and vegetable imports were from areas defined as climate vulnerable ([SHEFs 2023](#)). Under current projections of how climate change may impact yields, it is predicted that by 2050, 52% of legumes and 47% of fruit will be imported from climate vulnerable countries ([UK Health Security Agency, 2023](#)). Analysis of ten commodities representing 55% of the UK diet found that imported fruit and vegetables – particularly tomatoes and citrus – are the most vulnerable to climate change, with tomatoes forecast to cost an additional £5.20 per kilo by 2050 under a 'business as usual' emissions scenario ([IGD, 2025b](#)).

**British farmers and growers will continue to lose livelihoods:** Without proper transition support and a statutory framework that protects domestic production of nutrient rich food, more farmers and growers will be forced out of business. The knowledge, skills, and stewardship built up over generations will be lost, and with it, the capacity to feed ourselves in times of crisis.

**Children's health will continue to deteriorate:** In the next decade, childhood obesity will affect more than 40% of 11-year-olds ([RSPH, 2025](#)). Children born in the UK today face the prospect of a lifetime on weight-loss drugs to manage conditions that could have been prevented. NHS costs from type 2 diabetes alone will reach £15 billion annually by 2035/36, consuming resources desperately needed elsewhere. The economic burden of lost productivity and welfare spending will continue spiralling beyond the current £126 billion per year, with the most deprived communities bearing the greatest burden ([Nesta, 2025](#)). Halving obesity rates has been estimated to save taxpayers £136 per household ([Green Alliance, 2026](#)).

**Food policy will remain fragmented and vulnerable:** Without a statutory framework, policy will remain vulnerable to political change, short-term thinking, and the lobbying power of vested interests. Each new government will be free to abandon or dilute commitments, making long-term planning and investment impossible for farmers, food businesses and investors, and public health authorities.

***The cost of inaction compounds over time. Every year without a statutory framework is another year of rising obesity, declining domestic production, and missed opportunities to build resilience.***

## Conclusion

The cost-of-living crisis revealed the weaknesses in our food system that cannot be ignored.

The Good Food Bill is not a radical proposition. It does not ask government to do things it has never committed to. It asks government to mean what it says, to give its commitments legal force, to coordinate action across departments, to plan for the long term, and to be held accountable when it falls short.

The alternative is already visible. More children leaving primary school with conditions that will shorten their lives. More farmers abandoning land their families have tended for generations. More households choosing between food and warmth when the next crisis arrives. The cost of inaction is not abstract: it is measured in NHS waiting lists, food bank queues, and communities that have simply run out of options.

The next food shock is not a question of if, but when. The choice now is whether the UK prepares for it — or repeats the failures of the past

With thanks to the funder:



This work is supported by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Building a Green Future strategic theme [Project number 49522] as part of the Maximising UK Adaptation to Climate Change (MACC) programme co-designed by UKRI, Defra, the Met Office and the UK Government's Climate Change Committee.

