

For Immediate Use

Ulster Bank Introduces Companion Debit Card, Offering Greater Help and Security for Cocooning Customers

Elderly or vulnerable customers offered a safer and more secure way to pay for essentials through a trusted carer or volunteer

Companion Card is a debit card issued on a separate new account, new PIN with a €120 limit

Friday, 24 April 2020: Ulster Bank is introducing a new, more secure payment option for cocooning customers who may be relying on another person to purchase essential goods while they self-isolate.

The Companion Card is a debit card which can be topped up by €120 every five days by the customer and given to a trusted person or carer to enable them to make purchases on their behalf. In addition, ATM withdrawals using the card are limited to €60 per day and, like all bank cards, are subject to Ulster Bank's fraud monitoring systems.

To further enhance security, the Companion Card has its own card number and PIN, and is linked to a separate account associated with the customer's existing current account.

Commenting, Ulster Bank's Managing Director of Personal Banking, Ciarán Coyle, said:

"Ulster Bank understands that this may be a worrying time for our customers, particularly those who are self-isolating, and we are committed to finding innovative solutions that keep our customers safe and able to pay for the things they need, when they need them.

"We believe that the Companion Card offers greater peace of mind for cocooning customers whose only option currently may be to hand over cash to a trusted person or even their debit card, which we would not recommend. As an extra security measure, the customer can only top up their Companion Card by ringing our dedicated elderly or vulnerable customer care team, who are fully trained to spot suspicious activity or requests.

"Throughout these extraordinary times, we will continue to listen to and be guided by our customers in introducing services that meet their needs and provide meaningful help."

The move is the latest in a series of measures that Ulster Bank has introduced in response to the coronavirus crisis to protect vulnerable customers and enhance their ability to pay for essentials while protecting themselves.

In addition to the dedicated vulnerable customer phone line, the bank has introduced elderly or carer in-branch opening hours and a range of supports for personal and business customers.

Elderly or vulnerable customers who want to order a Companion Card or need to speak to someone about accessing their funds can Freephone our dedicated team of Customer Care experts, every day from 8am to 8pm, on 1800 656 001.

For more information about Ulster Bank's Covid-19 supports, please visit our website:
<https://digital.ulsterbank.ie/personal/help-and-support/coronavirus.html>

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NOTES TO THE EDITOR

- The Companion Card can only be used to purchase shopping, it cannot be used to make online purchases.