

Pandemic Priority Reset – 85% of us have changed what matters to us

53% plan to spend more time with their family

16% are feeling happier, 50% the same and 34% sadder since before restrictions were introduced

91% of respondents think people will work from home more frequently, but only 55% think they themselves will work from home more frequently*

(19 June 2020) The Ulster Bank survey, conducted by Empathy at the end of May, asked 1,050 adults in the Republic of Ireland, how their attitudes, priorities and value-driven behaviour had changed over the course of the pandemic, looking into their post-pandemic future. A huge 85% of respondents claim that their priorities have changed since COVID-19 restrictions were introduced. New emphasis on the importance of connection with your family (93%, increase of 6%) and physical/ mental health (90%/ 88%, both increased by 10%) far outweighed the importance of time spent working, at just 40% (decreased by 8%). 70% of respondents are worried about the future as a result of COVID-19 with more people worried about their health and the health of people in their household/ family (50%) than a recession (24%).

Just over a third (34%) of adults claim that they feel sadder since restrictions were introduced, with 16% of adults claiming they feel happier. Those aged 55-64 are more likely to feel sadder while those aged 18-24 are more likely to feel happier.

Just over 9 in 10 (91%) of respondents believe that others will work from home more frequently than they did before and 55% of people who can do so, think they themselves will work from home more frequently, however almost 4 in 10 (39%) of people who can work from home don't believe they will be allowed to work from home more frequently. Only 11% of people would consider moving to another part of the country as a result of remote working, with most people worried about broadband (72%).

83% of respondents want to be better prepared to stay safe and reduce risks and 64% of respondents want to empower themselves to feel more in control of their destiny. 47% want to be more inspired and inspire others. Young people (18-24) are most keen to make a bigger contribution to community or country or causes (76% agree, 48% average) and to want to be inspired/ inspire others (79% agree, 47% average).

Respondents increased their self sufficiency and sustainability throughout the pandemic with 51% of respondents trying to reduce food waste, 41% walking or cycling instead of using a car and 21% trying to be more energy efficient or conserving energy.

Respondents are most looking forward to seeing family (53%), having a meal out (50%), a trip to the hairdresser/ barber/ beautician (42%), an overseas holiday (40%), going shopping for non-

grocery items (36%) and going to the pub (31%). Respondents are least looking forward to taking public transport (28%), meeting up with people they don't really like (25%), trying to cope financially (22%), going back to work (17%), having to be social again (16%) and having to fly (16%).

Ulster Bank Chief Executive Jane Howard said:

“As a purpose-led Bank, that aims to enable people, families and businesses to thrive, it is hugely significant to see that people have changed their priorities and are planning some positive life changes post-pandemic. The survey says that while people are worried about health and the prospect of economic recession, they are also feeling somewhat hopeful about their future while almost half of respondents want to be inspired or inspire others. Although, we know that not everybody is feeling optimistic, it is heartening to see that people have tried to be more sustainable and focus more on their families, all while adjusting to huge changes in their lives.

“The more we understand our customers, the better we can serve them. We talk about being ‘Effortless Everyday and Brilliant When it Matters’ this pandemic has changed us all – we want to be tuned into that change – how we move forward as a society, is a conversation that everyone, including banks, has a stake in.”

Other key findings:

Just over 9 in 10 (93%) respondents claim their connection to their family is important to them now, increasing by 6% from the importance placed on this before restrictions, with 90% claiming their physical health is important to them. Other aspects in relation to mental health and time spent with others in the community are also deemed more important now, with the time spent working deemed less important (decrease of 8% to 40%).

Almost half (48%) of respondents with dependent children have enjoyed home schooling, with those aged 18-34 most likely to feel this is the case (66%). 90% said their children under 12 had managed well with the restrictions, with the most challenging aspects being not being able to see friends (79%), not being able to see family (54%) or being bored (47%). Only 19% of these parents felt fears about COVID-19 were the most challenging part of the restrictions for their children. For those parents with teenagers, 85% felt they had managed well with the restrictions; however 29% were worried about how much time their teenager was spending online.

41% of respondents are shopping online more throughout the pandemic, mainly for groceries (45%), clothes (33%) and DIY products (24%). 34% of people over the age of 65 say they have increased their online shopping habits. 80% of people have carried out their banking using

mobile apps or online services during the pandemic, with 78% of those aged over 65 banking digitally.

Post-pandemic, 53% of respondents plan to spend more time with their family, 53% plan to exercise more, 51% plan to spend less money on things they don't need, 45% plan to spend more time in the outdoors and 31% plan to be more mindful of how others are feeling.

Just over 6 in 10 (61%) of respondents claim that they have managed/are managing to save more since the introduction of restrictions, with those aged 18-24 (82%) most likely to be saving more and those aged 35-44 (49%) least likely to be doing so. Just over half (54%) of those who have managed to save more during the pandemic claim that they are keeping their savings for a rainy day, with 36% claiming that they are planning on going on a holiday and 23% planning on going out for a nice dinner.

45% of respondents who were employed pre-restrictions are working more hours, 35% are working less hours and 19% are working the same hours.

- 83% of respondents want to be better prepared to stay safe and reduce risks
- 67% want to re-evaluate their contingency plans to ensure they have access to what they need now and in the future
- 64% want to empower themselves to feel more in control of their destiny
- 48% want to make a bigger contribution to my community or country or causes
- 47% want to be more inspired and inspire others
- 37% want to change their groups/ become part of groups that help them be the best they can be

Ends.

*55% of those who can work from home

Notes to Editors:

Research

The Ulster Bank research was carried out by Empathy Research from 22-30 May 2020. Research was conducted through an online survey across a nationally representative sample of 1,050 adults aged 18+.