

## **Ulster Bank Sustainable Banking Report: 65% of Ulster Bank customers now bank using a digital platform, up 5% on last year, and almost 60% of existing accounts are now 'paperless'**

**April 23rd 2018:** Ulster Bank today releases its Sustainable Banking Report, detailing its progress in supporting its customers, colleagues, communities and shareholders. The report describes how Ulster Bank is becoming a safer, simpler and more sustainable bank as they adapt to changing needs of all of their stakeholders.

The growth in digital banking continues apace and digital disruption, through innovation and demand in a changing market, is evident throughout the report.

Digital highlights for 2017 include:

- 70% of active customers were digitally active
- 65% of the bank's total active customer base were using a digital channel to carry out their banking
- 59.5% of customer accounts were 'paperless'
- 40% of all active customers were using the mobile app (up from 31% in December 2016)
- There were over 63,000 digital activations in 2017

There were a number of milestone moments in 2017 as Ulster Bank became the first bank in Ireland to enable customers to access a banking app using Face ID, the facial authentication feature exclusive to iPhone® X. The bank introduced a number of additional new digital innovations, including: a facility for its customers to make future-dated transfers; credit card servicing to allow customers to increasingly 'self-serve'; and, for its business customers, the ability to add different business accounts in the same mobile session.

Commenting on the report, Gerry Mallon, CEO, said: "Our ambition is to become the number one bank for customer service, trust and advocacy by 2020, and being a strong, sustainable bank, with a culture of innovation is very much at the heart of achieving that goal. In 2017 we continued to make progress through innovation, building on digital offering credentials and expanding our outreach programmes through our Bank on Wheels and Community Bankers. We also invested in the wellbeing of our bank colleagues, a priority for us because we strongly believe that by becoming a better bank for our people, we become a better bank for our customers."

There was a higher level of support for SMEs through an increase in lending across a wide range of sectors including: agriculture, hospitality, retail, transport and manufacturing. Over the past three years Ulster Bank has committed funding for the development of over 1,000 new housing units, another 1,000 student living units and 275 apartments. In addition Ulster Bank has continued to fund renewable energy projects across the island of Ireland, helping customers to mitigate their own carbon emissions and reduce energy costs.

2017 saw the expansion of Ulster Bank's Bank on Wheels, which provided service to more customers in more rural locations across Ireland, and the introduction of six new community bankers, who provide financial guidance and advice to personal and business customers.

Diversity and inclusion are also priorities for Ulster Bank and there are many programmes and initiatives in place. Ulster Bank continued to work towards its target of having at least 30% senior

women in its top three leadership layers across each business by 2020 and to be fully gender balanced by 2030. In 2017 26% of the workforce at executive and senior management level were women, and 44% at management level.

Supporting communities in the areas of financial education, enterprise and innovation also featured strongly in 2017:

- **MoneySense:** the Ulster Bank programme to help young people towards a better financial future supported almost 3,000 students, through 94 interactive workshops
- **Equal opportunity in education:** Ulster Bank supported the DCU Access Scholarship Programme and the Belvedere College Social Diversity Programme
- **Skills and Opportunities Fund:** In the past three years Ulster Bank has distributed grants of over €425,055 in funding to 24 organisations; these grants have supported the creation of 304 jobs and 302 business start-ups
- **Young Social Innovators (YSI):** As sponsors of YSI Ulster Bank saw over 7,000 young people take part in youth-led social innovation projects, bringing a wide range of issues to the forefront including human trafficking, farm safety, sexual consent and mental health and wellbeing.
- **Volunteer hours:** In 2017 Ulster Bank staff gave over 3,000 volunteering hours to worthy causes
- **Cashback awards:** In 2017 Irish charities received 291 Cashback awards from Ulster Bank, amounting to a total sum of €72,750
- **Do Good Feel Good:** This programme resulted in a donation of €100,000 to Irish Heart.

Ulster Bank's Sustainable Banking Report can be viewed in full at <https://digital.ulsterbank.ie/globals/about-us/corporate-sustainability.html>

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