

# Managing your money



All you need to manage your money



 Ulster Bank

# Welcome

If you want to feel more confident about managing your money and preparing for the future, or would like a reference point in case your finances go off track, this guide is a good place to start.

To talk to us about managing your money:

- You can drop into your local Ulster Bank branch
- You can go online at **[www.ulsterbank.ie](http://www.ulsterbank.ie)**
- You can phone us on **1800 303 004**

# Helping you manage your money

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# Taking stock

## Overview

Before you can plan ahead, you need to know exactly where you stand with your money. The easiest way to figure out what you can (or can't) afford is simply to write down what money is coming in and what needs to go out. Preparing a budget is all about being realistic and, above all, honest with yourself. Here are some key things to consider.

## Taking stock of:

### 1. Your income

- The first and most obvious source of income is your salary, together with your partner's.
- You may also be entitled to tax credits and Child Benefit.
- Tax allowances are available for disabled people and carers, and your local Citizens Information Centre can give you more information about these and other entitlements.
- Be sure to include any interest you earn from savings, but don't be tempted to include future income that's uncertain, such as gifts or a possible inheritance.

### 2. Your spending

- Paying for your home is one of your most important outgoings. Your priority should be your mortgage repayments along with any loans secured on your home. If you are renting, rent payments are also top of the list.
- Essential bills come next. If utility bills are not paid, you could be cut off from essential services and taken to court to repay the debt.

- Income-tax demands, maintenance and child support must be paid in order to avoid a fine or a possible prison sentence. For instance, if you don't pay your television licence, you could face a fine of up to €1,000 for the first offence.
- Don't forget to include other bills such as credit and store-card bills, bank overdrafts, personal loans and hire purchase agreements. Even if you have stopped spending, repayments and interest still have to be paid.
- General household expenses cover food, any essential clothing items, childcare and other costs for running a home.
- Saving is very important if you want to stay on top of your finances. If possible, you should put a little away each month to help pay for holidays, birthdays, Christmas and emergencies.
- Travelling to work includes the costs of public transport or car expenses such as insurance, parking and petrol.

**Tip:** By paying as many bills as possible by monthly direct debit, you'll spread the costs and make sure you don't miss a payment. It's also quicker than writing cheques or money orders.

# Use our handy budget planner to see where you stand

## Budget planner

Your Income	Monthly amount €
Your salary/wages	
Your spouse or partner's salary/wages	
Child Benefit	
Disability benefits	
Income Support	
Maintenance	
Pensions	
Savings interest	
<b>Total income</b>	€ <b>a month</b>

Your Essential Spending	Monthly amount €
<b>Regular monthly bills</b>	
Mortgage/rent	
Maintenance payments	
Electricity	
Gas/oil/solid fuel	
TV licence/satellite subscriptions	
Other regular bills (e.g appliance rental)	
Personal/car loans	
Life insurance	
Building insurance	
Contents insurance	
Car insurance	
Car tax	
Credit/store card bills	
Broadband bills	
Phone bills (mobiles and landline)	

<b>Other regular costs</b>	<b>Monthly amount €</b>
Childcare	
Evening classes	
Food/groceries	
Petrol	
Public Transport	
School costs (dinners, uniforms, books)	

<b>Other occasional costs</b>	<b>Monthly amount €</b>
(work out the total yearly cost and divide by 12)	
Birthday	
Car repairs/servicing/NCT	
Christmas	
Clothing	
Decorating and house repairs	
Doctor/dentist/optician, etc	
Holidays	
<b>Total essential spending</b>	<b>€ a month</b>

Total Income	
Less total essential spending	
<b>Money left over to put towards savings and non-essential spending</b>	<b>€ a month</b>

<b>Savings and Pensions</b>	<b>Monthly amount €</b>
Regular savings	
Pension and contributions	
<b>Total savings</b>	<b>€ a month</b>

<b>Your Non-Essential Spending</b>	<b>Monthly amount €</b>
Trips out/Eating out	
Sports club membership	
Magazine subscriptions	
Other casual spending (cigarettes, sweets, etc)	
Children's pocket money	
Socialising (pub, cinema, theatre, etc)	
Charitable and church donations	
Other	
<b>Total: Non-essential spending allowance + Savings and Pension</b>	<b>€ a month</b>

# Taking action

## Overview

Putting all your income and outgoings down on paper might only confirm what you've known all along – that you're on top of your finances. However, many of us could do with a little extra help, even if it's just a few pointers on how to earn more money on savings or pay less for borrowing. Also, most of us could do more to prepare for the unexpected so that we have a cushion if things go wrong.

The rest of this guide contains tips and guidance on everything from cutting back on your spending and boosting your income, to saving and protecting yourself against the unexpected.

## Taking action by:

### 1. Cutting back on your spending

- Keep a diary of your spending for a month. You can't control some expenses, such as your mortgage and other loan repayments, rent and utility bills. But, you could be surprised at how much you spend on non-essential items like nights out, newspapers, magazines and takeaways.
- Shop around to find better value for money. Websites like **[www.compareireland.ie](http://www.compareireland.ie)** compare prices on everything from car finance and insurance to home phone and broadband charges. Even if you have a fee-free current account, check to make sure you aren't paying unnecessary charges. A useful website to help you do this is **[www.ccpc.ie/consumers/](http://www.ccpc.ie/consumers/)** Also, be sure to shop around for your everyday groceries and try to avoid impulse buying.
- Apply for online banking and you'll be able to pay your bills at the click of a button as well as keep a close eye on your balance and outgoings, allowing you to budget more effectively.
- If you find you're not clearing your credit card balance every month, avoid using your card for a while. It's the best way to get your spending under control. There's more on managing your credit cards on page 13.

- Save on your energy costs by making some small adjustments. Turn down your heating thermostat, switch off unnecessary lights and unplug electrical appliances when you're not using them.
- Take a look at your TV subscriptions and ask if you really need the movie and sports channels. If you only watch movies now and then, it's probably cheaper to use a streaming service.
- Public transport can often work out cheaper than driving to work. Check out cost-effective yearly tickets. If you can cycle or walk, better still. It's free exercise and could save on a gym membership.

## 2. Boosting your income

- Paying tax is a fact of life but by taking advantage of tax benefits, you can reduce your bill.
- If you're aiming to build up a lump sum for a home deposit or special holiday, consider some extra part-time work – an extra eight hours a week, at the minimum wage of €10.20 an hour, would bring in an extra €4,243.00 a year before tax.
- If you're a home owner, you can rent one or more rooms in your home and earn up to €14,000 in the tax year (01 January to 31 December). Make sure you claim any benefits you're entitled to. You may be entitled to claim tax relief on rent, medical bills, prescriptions and dental expenses. Generally speaking you may be able to claim benefits if you:
  - are on a low income (employed or looking for work)
  - have dependent children
  - are sick or disabled
  - are caring for someone
  - are aged 65 or over
  - have been bereaved

It's wise to get advice from free and independent advice centres such as your local Citizens Information office [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie) or tax office [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie).

**Tip:** Budgeting helps you to manage your money, reduce your debts and may even save you money. It also puts you in control, so that you're better equipped for an emergency.

# Saving

## Overview

Saving a little each month, no matter how small an amount, will give you peace of mind. It can help you pay for a major purchase, like a new car or a deposit for a house, but also help safeguard you against financial stress in the case of an unexpected expense, illness or redundancy.

## Start saving with:

### 1. Paying more off your loans

Most of us don't think of this form of saving, but if you have a personal loan or owe money on your credit card, you'll save more money by paying extra on these loans than you would by putting the same money into a savings account. That's because the rate of interest is usually higher on loans than on savings. So, extra payments over and above what's due on a loan gives you a bigger saving in interest than if you put that money into a savings account. If you have a variable rate mortgage, you can also do this and you'll effectively be saving at the rate of interest on your mortgage.

Ask your lender for an estimate of what you would save in interest by paying extra on your loan or mortgage, and how much earlier the loan could be paid off as a result.

### 2. Everyday saving

Deposit and savings accounts are most suitable for short-term savings like holidays or Christmas. When choosing an account, give some thought to how often you'll need to access your cash. Some accounts pay higher rates of interest if you leave your money on deposit for a set time – six months or more. If you think you'll need to dip in and out of your savings, an instant-access account may be a better option.

### 3. Long-term saving

Saving for something like a house deposit, your child's education, or your retirement, does require a little more discipline. Two of the main ways to save over the long-term are investments and pensions. Both these forms of saving carry some risk. However, over the long-term, they can deliver a better return than savings accounts.

- **Equity or stock-market investments** can earn a potentially high return over the long-term if you are willing to take some risk with your money. During the investment term, share prices may rise and fall so there is a risk you could get back less than you invested. However, over the long-term, 10 years or more, these investments are designed to produce a better return. There are also investment products available which provide capital security.

Never invest money in the stock-market if you think you might need it in the short term, and get professional financial advice before starting an investment plan.

#### **Prices of stocks may fall as well as rise**

- A **pension** is usually the most cost-effective way of saving for retirement as you get tax relief on your contributions.

The money in your pension fund should grow over the long-term and, when you retire, you may be able to take a portion of the value of your fund as a tax-free lump sum. Depending on the type of pension you have, you can use the rest to provide an income. This will be subject to tax.

For more information about pensions, visit **[www.pensionsauthority.ie](http://www.pensionsauthority.ie)** or **[www.ccpc.ie/consumers](http://www.ccpc.ie/consumers)**.

**Tip:** Always get independent financial advice before you invest in the stock market or in a pension.

# Borrowing

## ***Important Notice about Closure to New Business***

Ulster Bank Ireland DAC is no longer accepting any new application requests from personal customers.

There are some exceptions to this for existing customers, please visit our website [www.ulsterbank.ie](http://www.ulsterbank.ie) for full details and further assistance.

## Overview

Sensible borrowing can help to buy a car or start a business and almost no one would be able to afford a house if they had to pay the full amount up front. But don't be tempted to borrow more than you can afford or need, and do aim to repay your borrowings over as short a term as possible.

## Borrowing options:

### **1. Mortgage borrowing**

- Having a mortgage is usually the biggest financial decision we ever make because we have to borrow more and for longer, than at any other time. There are other cost factors too, such as the deposit, legal and surveyor fees, insurance, stamp duty and moving or selling costs as well as monthly bills. Despite the costs involved, a mortgage that you can afford makes good sense as owning your own home helps to give you longer-term financial security.
- How much you can borrow depends on the value of your home, whether you are buying alone or with a partner, your income and your current outgoings on other loans, credit card bills, household and living expenses. Based on this information, your lender will give you a rough calculation of how much you can borrow.

While it's tempting to go for the biggest loan you can get, you have to be sure you can afford the monthly repayments. Even if you're unemployed for a spell or working reduced hours, your mortgage still has to be paid. So allow some breathing space to cope with the unexpected.

- It's also tempting to pick the longest mortgage term, as this makes your repayments more affordable. But it's important to remember that the longer you take to repay your mortgage, the more interest you pay. This increases the overall cost of the loan, so keep the term as short as you can.
- When it comes to choosing a mortgage there are lots of decisions to be made – a fixed or variable rate, the repayment and the mortgage term. What you decide will affect your finances over the long-term, so do take the time to seek independent advice from a mortgage adviser.

## 2. Short-term borrowing

- An **overdraft** is not the cheapest way to borrow, but it can work well as a short-term option, as it gives you some extra money to meet immediate needs. Make sure you arrange your overdraft in advance with your bank as higher rates of interest and fees will be charged if it's unauthorised.
- A **credit card** is a flexible way to borrow but it's easy to lose control. Follow these simple rules to manage your credit card debts and avoid unnecessary fees and charges:
  - Always try to repay the balance in full each month. You won't have to pay any interest if you do this. If you can't repay in full, pay as much as you can, as soon as you receive the statement.
  - Don't wait for the 'payment due' date. If your payment is even one day late, interest will usually be charged on the full balance and you'll also incur a late payment fee.
  - Avoid missing a payment – you'll pay a missed payment charge each time.
  - Never repay just the minimum each month. Otherwise, you'll have to pay much more interest and it could take years to repay the balance.
  - If you think you'll have difficulty covering your credit card borrowings, we want to help. However, it's important that you let us know immediately so please contact us on 0818 210 261 if you're feeling under financial pressure and we'll give you all the help we can.

### 3. Longer-term borrowing

- A **personal loan** may be the most suitable way to borrow if you want to buy a car or a new kitchen. Just check with your lender to see if you can make extra payments or pay a lump sum to clear your loan earlier than planned without penalty. This will help you reduce interest charges.
- A **mortgage top-up** could mean a lower interest rate than a personal loan. Do check out possible legal and valuation fees and ask if you can repay the top-up loan over a shorter period of time than your mortgage.
- **Hire purchase (HP)** is a popular method for buying expensive items, such as a car. You pay an initial deposit, followed by monthly instalments over an agreed period. Car Finance products such as the Hire Purchase product Lombard offer can be cheaper than a personal loan, it is important that you review the rates and weigh up your options to get best financial option that suits your budget. Payments are fixed which can help with household budgeting. For Consumer Car Finance, lending criteria, terms and conditions apply. A documentation fee may be charged and a purchase fee will be payable at the end of the agreement.

You should be cautious of in store Consumer Credit products that offer so called ‘buy now, pay later’ interest free deals on items like furniture and computers. If you do not settle the debt in full by the final settlement date, the company could backdate interest at the full rate to the date you bought the item.

- **Borrowing a lump sum** to pay off several debts can simplify your finances, but you should only do this to tackle high-interest debts that can't be switched to a lower rate. Also, avoid extending the length of your new loan for longer than the original debt.

If you're considering using a debt consolidation or debt-management firm who offer to bring all your debts ‘under one roof’, be conscious that while your repayments could be lower, you may be in debt for longer and pay more interest in the long run.

**Tip:** Concentrate on paying off your high-interest debts, such as credit cards, store cards and overdrafts, first. The higher the interest rate on your loan, the more you will save by paying extra.

# Protecting yourself

## Overview

It's very simple. Protecting your family, your home and your income is vital. Otherwise, if you became ill and couldn't work for a long period or, in the unfortunate event of your early death, your family may not be able to cope financially.

## Protecting yourself and your family with:

### 1. Life assurance

- The simplest, and cheapest, life assurance is known as level-term assurance. You decide the amount of life insurance you want, and how long you want the policy for. You pay a fixed premium each month, and if you die during the term, your policy pays out the amount you insured as a lump sum. You can decide who receives the lump sum, but generally it will be a family member. Most people with a mortgage are legally obliged to have a form of life assurance called Mortgage Protection. It's a life policy that pays off whatever you still owe on your mortgage at the time of your death.

Ideally you should have separate cover for your mortgage and your family.

**Tip:** Basic life assurance is similar, no matter who is providing the policy. However, prices do vary so shop around for the most competitive quote.

- **Critical illness cover** pays out a tax-free lump sum if you are diagnosed with a specified critical illness. If you're unsure about whether your employer would continue to pay you if you became seriously ill, it's definitely worth looking into for peace of mind. Your premium depends on the size of the lump sum you want to receive and your age and general health at the time you start the policy. For more details on the financial effects of illness, see page 18.

- **Income protection insurance** pays a regular monthly income, after a chosen period, if you can't work because of an illness or injury. It is designed to replace some of your income if you can no longer work; you can take out income protection if you work full time or are self-employed and earning an income. The benefit usually continues to be paid up until you are able to return to work, and you also get tax relief on your contributions.
- **Payment Protection Insurance (PPI)** will pay your monthly loan or mortgage payments for a set length of time if you can't work due to sickness, accident or compulsory redundancy. Policies vary so check to make sure your occupation is covered, how long you have to wait before it starts to pay, and how many months it will pay out for if you do have to claim. Remember, most plans will only make loan or mortgage repayments for a maximum of 12 months.
- **Other forms of protection:** There are a range of policies available to cover you for everything from accidents, breakdown of appliances like washing machines, or loss of your mobile phone. Before signing up, ask yourself whether you need the policy. You may be better off saving a small 'rainy day' fund for emergencies instead.

**Tip:** It's worth thinking about building up a savings fund you could draw on to meet your mortgage or loan repayments for a number of months if you became ill or had an accident. Once you have enough saved, you may not need payment protection insurance.

# Dealing with the unexpected

## Overview

Losing a loved one, separation or divorce, illness or redundancy can put a tremendous financial strain on you and your family. Positive events, like the birth of a child, can too. Therefore, it's important to plan ahead so that if something happens, you can cope financially.

## Dealing with:

### 1. Losing your job

- Aim to plan ahead and build up a pot of rainy-day money (say, three months' wages) in an instant-access account. Consider taking out redundancy insurance, but remember it won't pay out if you knew you were likely to lose your job when you applied.
- If you do lose your job, put any redundancy money you receive into a high-interest, instant-access savings account. Don't be tempted to invest it in longer-term savings as you may need it in a hurry.
- Draw up a budget to make sure you can meet essential bills and, if necessary, cut back on the non-essentials.
- If you have money worries, don't ignore them, see where to get help (page 22).
- Find out if you're entitled to a tax rebate or State benefits. Your local tax office or Citizens Information Centre can help explain your entitlements.

### 2. If your marriage or relationship ends

- Do seek legal advice as soon as possible so that you understand your options and how they might affect you both financially.

- Even if the separation is likely to be on good terms, set up separate bank accounts and credit cards so each of you can organise your finances from the start.
- Keep a record of essential bills and expenses so you can protect your standard of living.
- Make sure you have a clear record of your ex-partner's financial position, including pension details and any joint assets like savings and property.
- Check to see if you're entitled to any tax credits or benefits as a single parent.
- Review your life, mortgage and income protection insurance arrangements.
- Consider the most appropriate way to cover child maintenance payments.
- Draw up a new Will to make sure your children and other dependants are protected in case of your own death or that of your partner.
- Try not to let any personal animosity get in the way of financial decisions. The more you argue between lawyers, the more it will cost.

### **3. Illness**

- A prolonged illness can have a big impact on your finances, so you should consider how you would manage if you suffered a loss of income due to illness.
- Find out your employer's policy on sick pay. If you have no sick pay cover with your job, consider setting up a savings fund to cover your salary for at least six months. If you don't currently have life or critical illness insurance, now is the time to consider your needs. Remember, most insurers won't cover you for an illness you already have.
- If you have financial dependants, or you share household expenses with someone else, discuss with them how they would cope if you died or if you became ill.
- Check that you have an up-to-date Will to make sure that the people who matter most to you inherit from your estate.

- If you do become ill, take action early. Ignoring the problem will only make the financial situation and stress worse.
- Review any existing financial plans and make new ones to reflect the change in your circumstances.
- If illness results in a lower income and extra expenses, this may be the time to use any money previously set aside for use in an emergency.
- If you have enough savings and investments, it may be possible to rearrange them so that they produce a steady income if needed.
- Seek advice from the Citizens Information Board to see what benefits you and your family may be entitled to.

#### **4. Bereavement**

- In planning ahead, make sure you have enough life assurance for you and any other income earner in your household.
- Write a Will so you can be sure your money goes where you intend it to. If you die without a Will, settling your estate will take a lot longer.
- Check to see if your pension scheme provides for your spouse and dependants if you die.
- In the unfortunate event of bereavement, get in touch with all the organisations your partner had a financial relationship with to sort out bank accounts, insurance payouts and claim any pension entitlements.
- Ask for extra original copies of the death certificate, as most organisations won't accept photocopies.
- Check to see if you are entitled to State benefits, such as Widow's or Widower's Allowance or One Parent Family Allowance.
- Seek independent investment advice if you have received money from an insurance policy or pension.
- Don't be rushed into decisions.

# Managing debt

## Overview

Anyone can get into difficulty managing their debt. Changes in your circumstances such as; job loss, redundancy, reduced hours, reduction in salary, divorce, the death of a loved one, over borrowing, illness or a new baby; can put huge pressure on your finances. These can quickly result in missed loan repayments or mortgage arrears.

It's important not to ignore the situation or pretend it's not happening. There are solutions. With our help, taking control of your finances and getting back on track could be easier than you think.

## What can you do about problem debt?

If you find yourself falling behind with loan or mortgage repayments, talk to us or your lender as soon as possible. By making us aware of your full financial situation, we can explore all your options and look at working out a solution with you.

### **Here are some steps to take if you find yourself in financial difficulty:**

- Work out a personal budget and stick to it.
- Make sure you're claiming all the benefits and tax credits you're entitled to.
- Contact your local Community Welfare Officer or local Citizens Information Centre for advice on what your individual entitlements are.
- Tackle your priority debts first, for example your mortgage and secured loans.
- See if you can work out a repayment timetable that suits everyone.
- Get free independent money advice from agencies such as the Citizens Information Board (CIB) and Money Advice & Budgeting Service (MABS).

### **Here are some things you should never do if you find yourself in difficulty:**

- Never ignore missed repayments, they won't go away.
- Don't ignore correspondence from your financial institution.
- Don't avoid calls from your financial institution, as talking to your bank should be the first step to helping you get the situation under control.

### **Protecting your credit rating**

- Lenders in Ireland, as in other countries, have access to a central register that holds details of borrowers and their history of loan repayments. The register holds personal information about borrowers as well as information about their repayments on mortgages, loans, overdrafts or credit cards.
- If your credit record is poor, a lender may decline to give you a loan even if you can afford to repay it. So, it's important to protect your credit record.
- Once you meet all your loan repayments, your credit record will be protected. If you are in danger of missing repayments on any form of loan or mortgage, contact your lenders so that a new repayment schedule can be worked out.

If you would like a copy of your information held by the Central Credit Register, credit reference and fraud prevention agencies we use, or if you want further details of how your information will be used by the Central Credit Register and credit reference agencies please visit their websites or contact them using the details below. You can request your own credit report at any time from the Central Credit Register. They may charge a fee.

### **The Central Credit Register**

Web Address: <http://www.centralcreditregister.ie>

Email: [consumerinfo@centralcreditregister.ie](mailto:consumerinfo@centralcreditregister.ie)

Phone: **+353 (0)1 224 5500**

## Complaints procedure

If you're not satisfied with any of our products or services, we have a complaint handling procedure that you can use to resolve such matters. A leaflet giving full details of our procedure is available in conjunction with this brochure.

If your complaint relates to a product or service purchased online, you can contact the European Commission using their Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform. The ODR platform, primarily aimed at European Union (EU) cross-border disputes, is designed to help consumers resident in the EU get access to dispute resolution if they remain unhappy with the response they have received from a trader established in the EU. To use the ODR platform <http://ec.europa.eu/odr> you will need the following information: [ComplaintsRI@ulsterbank.com](mailto:ComplaintsRI@ulsterbank.com). Please note that under current rules the European Commission will ultimately redirect your complaint to the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman (FSPO), therefore you may prefer to contact us or the FSPO directly in the first instance regarding your complaint.

## Where to get help

It can be hard to know where to turn when you are in financial difficulty but we want you to be aware of all the options. So here is a list of agencies that can offer you help and guidance in relation to controlling your debt. Remember to make the most of the assistance available as early as possible.

### Ulster Bank Branches

The first step in managing debt is to talk to us. To contact your local Ulster Bank branch visit [www.ulsterbank.ie](http://www.ulsterbank.ie).

### Ulster Bank Arrears Support Unit

If you are having difficulty meeting your loan or mortgage repayments; or you are already in arrears, we're here to help. You can contact our arrears support team on:



**Mortgage arrears 1800 435 763**

(Mon -Thur 9am - 7.30pm, Fri 9am - 6pm, Sat 9am - 1pm)

**Personal arrears 0818 210 276**

(Mon -Thur 9am - 6.30pm, Fri 9am - 6pm, Sat 9am - 1pm)

**Credit Card arrears 01 7025257**

(Mon -Fri 8am - 8pm Sat, 8am - 1pm)



[www.ulsterbank.ie/managingdebt](http://www.ulsterbank.ie/managingdebt)

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### The Competition & Consumer Protection Commission

The Competition & Consumer Protection Commission provides free independent consumer information on financial products.



**01 402 5555**



[www.ccpc.ie/consumers](http://www.ccpc.ie/consumers)

## Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)

MABS is a government run agency that provides free, confidential and independent advice on your debt problems. They have offices throughout Ireland, where their advisers can assess your overall financial situation, offer valuable advice and negotiate a new repayment schedule with lenders on your behalf.



**0818 072 000**

Mon-Fri 9am to 8pm



**[www.mabs.ie](http://www.mabs.ie)**

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## Citizens Information Board

This is a national support agency that provides free information about entitlements to public services and benefits for Irish citizens. Visit your nearest Citizens Information Centre.



**0818 074 000**

Mon-Fri 9am to 8pm



**[www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)**

## Citizens Information Board and MABS website

We suggest you visit the joint website for the Citizens Information Board and MABS, which provides information on the services and entitlements available to you, if you are having difficulty paying your mortgage.

**[www.keepingyourhome.ie](http://www.keepingyourhome.ie)**

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## Court Service

The Courts Service can give you detailed information on the courts system and can answer any questions you have.



**01 888 6000**



**[www.courts.ie](http://www.courts.ie)**

### Legal Aid Board

This organisation aims to provide professional, efficient, cost-effective and accessible legal aid. They will also provide you with legal advice.



**066 947 1000**



**[www.legalaidboard.ie](http://www.legalaidboard.ie)**

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### Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman

This is a service to help consumers deal with unresolved complaints against financial service providers. It is a free independent service available to personal customers, small limited companies and charities, trusts, clubs and partnerships.



**01 567 7000**



**[www.fspo.ie](http://www.fspo.ie)**

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### Revenue Commissioners

Get accurate and up-to-date information about your tax allowances and tax reliefs. **[www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie)**

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### Social Welfare Agencies

You may be entitled to help with your financial situation, so you should check up on any potential entitlements. For a list of social welfare agencies that may be able to assist you. **[www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)**

# Complimentary Financial Health Check

## Overview

If like most of us, you keep meaning to organise your finances but never get around to it, why not take advantage of our complimentary Financial Health Check. It's a practical, useful face-to-face session that will get you started. It'll help alert you to potential savings you can make and the best ways to plan ahead.

## Key features of **the Financial Health Check**

- One of our customer advisers will sit down with you for 45 minutes to assess your finances and look at different ways to see how you could better manage your money.
- Our adviser will help you assess your current income and outgoings and suggest ways to improve your financial position. You don't have to make decisions on the spot, but at least you'll know your options.
- After the review, you'll know where you stand financially and can decide what you need to put in place so you keep your finances on track and start making more of your hard-earned cash.

### **Make a start by considering these important questions**

- Can you reduce the interest you're paying on your credit card?  
You may be eligible for a card with a lower interest rate or better credit limit.
- Are you aware of all the benefits offered with current accounts?

- Have you looked at the convenience of internet banking and how it could help you keep up to date with your bill payments, avoid charges and keep track of your bank balance?
- What expenses do you foresee coming up, and how will you finance them? Whether you prefer to save for a new car or holiday or consider a loan for home improvements, we can help you weigh up the options.
- What can you do to prepare for your future? Different savings and investments offer different levels of security, risk and growth. Find out what suits you best and improve your current savings or finally start that long-term savings plan at a level you're comfortable with.

To find out more or to book a Financial Health Check, please contact your local branch who can also arrange an appointment.

Ulster Bank Products and Services discussed during the Financial Health Check may be available subject to status and terms and conditions. Credit products and Investment products are available to over 18s only.

This booklet is intended for use as a reference guide only. All information contained within is subject to change. If you need advice, speak to an independent financial adviser. Details are correct as at November 2021.

To find out more:

 Call into your local branch

 1800 303 004

 [ulsterbank.ie](https://www.ulsterbank.ie)

**Braille, large print and audio**

This brochure is also available in Braille, large print, audio or on disk.

Please contact your local branch for details.

 **Ulster Bank**

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