

A man wearing a grey beanie, a brown zip-up jacket, and blue jeans is crouching in a green field. In the background, a green tractor is visible, and the scene is set against a backdrop of rolling hills under a cloudy sky.

How we make a difference

Ulster Bank Sustainable Banking report 2015

Help for what matters

 **Ulster Bank**

Sustainable banking

Ulster Bank shares with our parent bank RBS a clear purpose and ambition to be the number one bank for customer service, trust and advocacy. Running our business in a responsible and sustainable way is at the core of that ambition, and is fundamental to achieving it. Sustainable banking means serving our customers exceptionally well, motivating and engaging our people to deliver that service and making a difference to the communities we serve.

We report our sustainability performance each year as part of the RBS Sustainable Banking Report. This shorter report draws out some of the key areas of Ulster Bank's sustainability performance in 2015. It is structured on the theme of 'Determined to make a difference', reflecting our collective determination as a business to continue to add value to our customers, colleagues, communities and corporate stakeholders.

In the past year we simplified our business by aligning our Northern Ireland business to RBS in the UK. This allows us to focus on serving our 1.9 million customers in our respective markets north and south, while still enabling all our customers to benefit from being part of a large-scale international bank.

A key achievement for us in 2015 was the independent recognition we received for excellence in sustainability. We won the overall 2015 Chambers Ireland Award for Outstanding Achievement in CSR, the Community award for our *MoneySense* Programme and the Best Learning and Development Organisation Award from Irish Institute of Training & Development. Each of these awards reflect our sustained commitment to responsible business practices.

We're certainly proud of these achievements, but not complacent about the challenges ahead given the rapid changes impacting our sector through technology innovation, shifting consumer trends and changing demographics. To run a sustainable business we also need to focus on the future, anticipate these challenges and take action to address them.

We're actively embracing innovation in all its forms to create value for our customers, so that we can meet their needs sustainably in the future. We're also committed to running our business in a responsible, open and transparent way as our stakeholders expect us to do.



Paul Stanley, Interim Chief Executive



Living our values

Our values guide our actions every day, in every part of our business.

Serving customers

- We exist to serve customers.
- We earn their trust by focusing on their needs and delivering excellent service.

Doing the right thing

- We do the right thing.
- We take risk seriously and manage it prudently.
- We prize fairness and diversity and exercise judgement with thought and integrity.

Working together

- We care for each other and work best as one team.
- We bring the best of ourselves to work and support one another to realise our potential.

Thinking long term

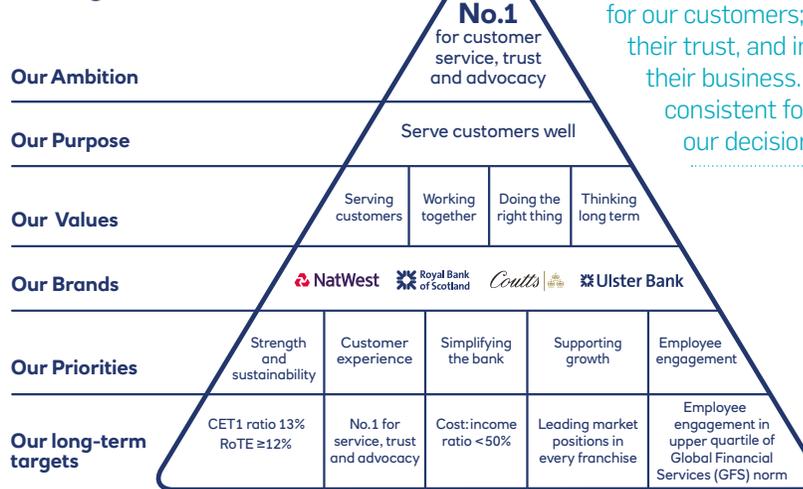
- We know we succeed only when our customers and communities succeed.
- We do business in an open, direct and sustainable way.

The **YES CHECK** is a simple tool with five questions that help to guide our decisions and actions.



- 1 Does what I am doing keep our customers and Ulster Bank safe and secure?
- 2 Would customers and colleagues say I am acting with integrity?
- 3 Am I happy with how this would be perceived on the outside?
- 4 Is what I am doing meeting the standards of conduct required?
- 5 In five years' time would others see this as a good way to work?

Our blueprint for lasting success



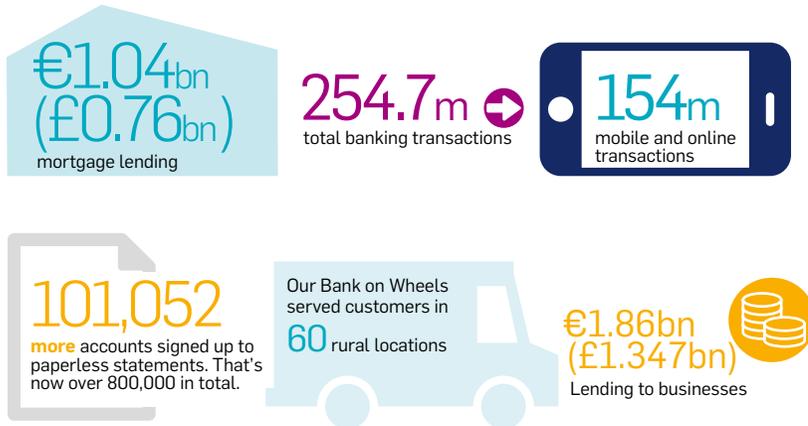
We share with RBS a strategy that has one very simple aim. To make this a great bank for our customers; one that will earn their trust, and in turn win more of their business. This ambition ensures consistent focus and underpins all our decisions and actions.

Understanding the Future of Ireland

As Ireland emerges from recession into a more hopeful and confident future, Ulster Bank is listening to our customers and wider public to gain insight into what matters to them today and in the future. We've partnered with marketing company OMD on a large-scale research project *The Future of Ireland*. The project uses a rich combination of survey findings and focus groups to define what matters to people now, how they feel about the future, about family, community, society and the political structures governing the country.

The research is one of a number of tools the bank uses to gain insight into the trends influencing our customers and communities at a time of profound change. Anticipating and responding to these trends is important in building a sustainable bank that meets our customers' needs into the future and continues to support inclusive growth and economic recovery in Ireland.

Our all-island performance at a glance:



We helped unbanked customers open **18,845** new **Basic Bank Accounts**



We set out our commitments and support in writing to **10,400** customers who were in difficulty repaying their home loan



"My branch in Midleton couldn't be more helpful. They come out of the branch to serve me at the car so that I don't have the trouble of taking out my wheelchair. When I tell people, they can't believe the level of service I get. It goes beyond money and profit ...they genuinely care about their customers."

Paudge Deehan, Ulster Bank Customer

Determined to make a difference for our customers

Breakdown of transactions 2015

Branch	29.1 _m
Telephone	6.0 _m
Online	64.3 _m
Mobile	89.6 _m
ATM	65.7 _m

In 2015 we continued to focus on great customer service. For us that means innovating to anticipate and respond to changing customer needs, making it easy to bank with us and treating customers fairly, especially those in vulnerable situations. It means continuously improving customer experience, protecting our customers' money and helping people to build financial capability and resilience.

Innovating to meet changing customers' needs

We aim to offer our customers choice and convenience in how they do business with us. Alongside our 174 branches and 1,011 non-charging ATMs, we extended our services to approximately 1,600 Post Offices, while our Bank on Wheels mobile banks served customers in 60 rural locations island-wide.

In the Republic of Ireland our mobile mortgage managers visit customers in their homes or workplaces at a time convenient to them to discuss their mortgage needs.

Whilst our face to face branch service will always be an important part of our offering, customer demand for services through new technologies continues to grow. Mobile and online banking are the

preferred channels for 59% of our active customers, accounting for 154 million transactions last year.

As a result of these changing customer patterns, we continuously reviewed, upgraded and expanded our mobile and online banking services in 2015. We were the first bank to introduce Apple Pay in NI and Touch ID island-wide, which enables customers to access their accounts using a fingerprint; we launched a new iPad mobile App, extended usage of mobile banking to Windows and Kindle users, and launched our new Blackberry mobile App.

101,052 more accounts signed up to paperless banking, with 815,000 customers now opting for online and mobile statements.

Simpler, fairer banking

During 2015 we continued our drive towards simpler, fairer banking. We improved our complaint handling processes and made solid progress on our customer satisfaction targets. In building customer loyalty, we were the first bank to offer existing customers the same mortgage rate deals as new customers.

Basic Bank Accounts – which mirror the features of a current account but without overdraft facilities – are a vital gateway to banking services for customers with a poor credit history. In 2015 we opened over 18,000 new basic bank accounts, enabling access to services for the unbanked.

In Northern Ireland we launched our new basic current account, the Foundation Account. This is available to unbanked customers who are ineligible for a full-service current account, existing customers who are in financial difficulty and customers who may be vulnerable due to illness, bereavement or other difficult life events.

We continue to help customers avoid unnecessary charges, with Text Alerts to let them know when their balance falls below a set level. Our Current Account in the Republic of Ireland offers a €4 per month flat fee with no transaction charges – one of the most transparent, simple and good value current account options on the market.

Resolving complaints

Resolving customer complaints quickly and to our customers' satisfaction is fundamental to good customer service. In 2015 we achieved a reduction in complaints of 29% due to service and process improvements, which we are committed to continuing. By the end of 2016 our aim is to have reduced complaints by 40% in total.

Key complaint data 2015

	Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland
Customers satisfied with how their complaint was handled	76%	74%
Number of fully trained complaint handlers	210	436
Performance on Quality Assurance – Complaint Handling	97%	97%
% of total complaints referred to the Ombudsman	*5%	1%

* Ombudsman referrals include packaged account complaints

Measuring customer service

We use a range of studies, surveys and analytics to measure our customer satisfaction performance, and build on these findings to drive positive changes for customers.

Throughout the year customers who have interacted with us in the previous 48 hours either in branch or by telephone are randomly selected and invited to rank their level of satisfaction with a number of different aspects of our service. The responses are analysed and findings reported to us by independent research company Watermelon Research.

We also began in 2015 to use these measures for our private banking clients, mortgage customers and business banking customers. Full year-end satisfaction scores for these customers will be available at end of 2016.

Branch	% Customers 'Extremely Satisfied'	
	Year-end 2014	Year-end 2015
Northern Ireland	84%	86%
Republic of Ireland	78%	81%
Telephony		
Northern Ireland	66%	84%
Republic of Ireland	65%	78%

Support for customers in vulnerable situations

We set up a dedicated 'Customers in Vulnerable Situations' working group in 2015 to further strengthen our support for customers in vulnerable situations. The focus was on educating and upskilling our staff to help them identify and offer additional support to vulnerable customers. Amongst the initiatives introduced were a new Disability e-learning module, Unconscious Bias training, Friends of Dementia information sessions and 'Life Event' cards to embed understanding of the needs of customers coping with difficult life events such as serious illness, bereavement, divorce or separation.

We signed up to the UK Dementia Charter, releasing a series of information videos for all employees to deepen understanding of the needs of customers with conditions like Dementia or Alzheimer Disease, that may limit capacity to make informed financial decisions.

Following the passing of new legislation in Ireland under the Assisted Decision Making Capacity Act, we're working with our sector's representative body, the Banking & Payments Federation of Ireland, to share knowledge and ensure our sector is at the forefront in supporting customers, their families and carers when extra help is needed.

Helping customers in financial difficulty

While the improved economic and employment outlook in 2015 led to a welcome decline in mortgage arrears, we know that many of our customers remain financially vulnerable. During the year we continued to support customers in financial difficulties, encouraging them to engage with us and offering a range of flexible repayment options.

We actively signpost customers to independent advice, working collaboratively with agencies such as StepChange, Advice NI and MABS to find the most sustainable solutions for our customers.

Our priority is to help our customers stay in their homes, and home repossession will only be considered after all appropriate alternative solutions have been considered.

In 2015, we repossessed 265 properties in the Republic of Ireland and 125 in Northern Ireland, a reduction of approximately 25% compared with 2014. The range of early intervention measures we introduced in 2015 contributed to this reduction.



Home Loan Commitments

In 2015 we ran a proactive campaign in the Republic of Ireland for customers who were finding it difficult to repay their home loans. We wrote to approximately 10,400 long-term arrears customers inviting them to engage with us, outlining the support we could provide for them and the flexible repayment solutions we offer. Our aim was to reassure customers who were worried and encourage them to engage with us to find an affordable solution to remain in their homes. Our 350 specially trained agents supported more than 23,000 customers, both through our dedicated Freephone helpline service and in person through our field agents, to reach the best solution for their circumstances.

Protecting our customers' money and data

The costs of financial fraud continues to rise, much of it cyber-enabled. Like other large banks, RBS and Ulster Bank invest heavily in fraud prevention and detection systems to protect our customers' money. Equally, we train and support our front-line teams to be constantly alert to unusual transaction activity on customers' accounts, particularly in the case of vulnerable customers. Employee training on fraud prevention is mandatory.

Collaborating with law enforcement and other agencies is a core part of how we protect our customers against frauds, scams and financial abuse. We also engage in education and awareness raising activities with our customers.

In 2015, our fraud and securities teams delivered 26 customer security awareness events to approximately 1,043 business and personal customers, educating them on the latest frauds and scams, and providing guidance on protecting their personal and business accounts. Their activities supplement the continuous work of RBS fraud and security specialists in protecting the bank and its customers.



Tackling elder financial abuse

Partnering with Age Action to tackle elder financial abuse.

As we age, it's natural to trust our family or carers to look after our banking needs – but sometimes that trust is abused. Almost 50% of Ulster Bank's frontline staff report having dealt with suspected financial abuse of customers in the past year.

In tackling this growing problem, we partnered with Age Action to host an Elder Financial Abuse forum, which was attended by older citizens, carers, fraud investigators and other stakeholders. A range of professionals shared their insights including staff from the bank's Fraud and Security teams, who explained how we work with police authorities and the health services to help fight financial abuse, scams and frauds.

"Every year, hundreds of older people face financial abuse, sometimes at the hands of those closest to them. It's important to help older people identify the signs before it's too late. This event gave us new insight into the complex role of banks – they have to probe, ask sensitive questions to protect their customers – but equally they have to respect the customer's right to privacy. We've been struck by the empathy Ulster Bank has for these issues, and the lengths they go to in trying to protect their customers."

Justin Moran, Head of Advocacy and Communications with Age Action.



'This is a bank that understands the nature of our business. I can trust, after all these years, they'll have our back and will help us out'

**Paul Young, CEO,
Cartoon Saloon**

Case Study Hello Hollywood

From Kilkenny to Hollywood, we've been supporting animation studio Cartoon Saloon every step of the way. Since its formation 16 years ago, the company, which makes cartoon animations and feature films, has achieved remarkable success – including two Oscar nominations, for its work.

Employees of the company regularly travel from Ireland to link up with other creative companies in Hollywood and beyond, and Ulster Bank helps them access their money quickly and safely whilst on the move.

We're also making banking simpler for the company back home in Ireland. Cartoon Saloon has been attracting animators from across Europe to come to work in Ireland. By liaising closely with the bank's Anti Money Laundering team, our local Kilkenny branch helps Cartoon Saloon's new staff to open the bank accounts they need quickly and easily.

Whether at home or abroad, by making banking one less thing to worry about, we've helped Cartoon Saloon focus on what matters – building a successful business.

Supporting Enterprise and Innovation

We deliver banking services to small, medium and large businesses in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, facilitating business and economic growth, and sustaining jobs in our economies. Against the backdrop of a dynamic and recovering market, Ulster Bank is well placed as part of RBS group to give our corporate and SME customers access to products, technology innovations and international markets served by our parent bank.

We are currently the only Irish bank with full membership of IBOS – an international network of banks that allows our corporate and SME clients access to banking services abroad. At a local level our relationship managers and sector specialist teams, bespoke start-up packages and asset finance services support a wide range of corporate and SME customers, with additional support for SMEs through:

- Funding Ireland's leading online business portal smallbusinesscan.com where entrepreneurs can share experiences, get advice and support their peers
- Celebrating success across seven sectors island-wide through our Business Achievers Awards Programme
- Running sector-specific business seminars (e.g. Young Farmers, Nursing Homes, Hotels & Leisure)
- Partnering with Dogpatch labs to provide a co-working space for scaling new business startups.

Innovating to meet changing customer needs

Investment in financial technology companies has risen globally. Traditional banking is changing. Businesses and consumers are increasingly demanding mobile, interactive, multi-channel, always-on banking services. Recognising the impact of these forces on our business, we opened an offsite innovation hub in Dogpatch Labs located in the historic 200 year old Irish Vaults in Dublin's Docklands. The Ulster Bank hub houses the bank's Innovation Solutions team as they work side by side with Ireland's start-up community to deliver creative new products and ways to serve our customers.

Apart from hosting a variety of customer events, our Innovation team have held three hackathons to date and are piloting new concepts. Amongst those successfully piloted is a new Video Chat application that enables our Mobile Mortgage Manager Team offer remote advice and support for mortgage customers. With the pilot launching in Q4 2015, it was the first time an Irish bank had used this type of technology for communicating with their customers.

Case Study New Innovation Hub at Dogpatch Labs



"This initiative will see us playing a much wider role in supporting Ireland's technology community through events and workshops. It's a vital piece of infrastructure to support Ireland's startup ecosystem and will now also house Ulster Bank's offsite innovation hub – which is a growing trend in other parts of the world but is a pioneering first for Ireland, thanks to this new partnership with the bank"

**Patrick Walsh, Managing Director,
Dogpatch Labs**

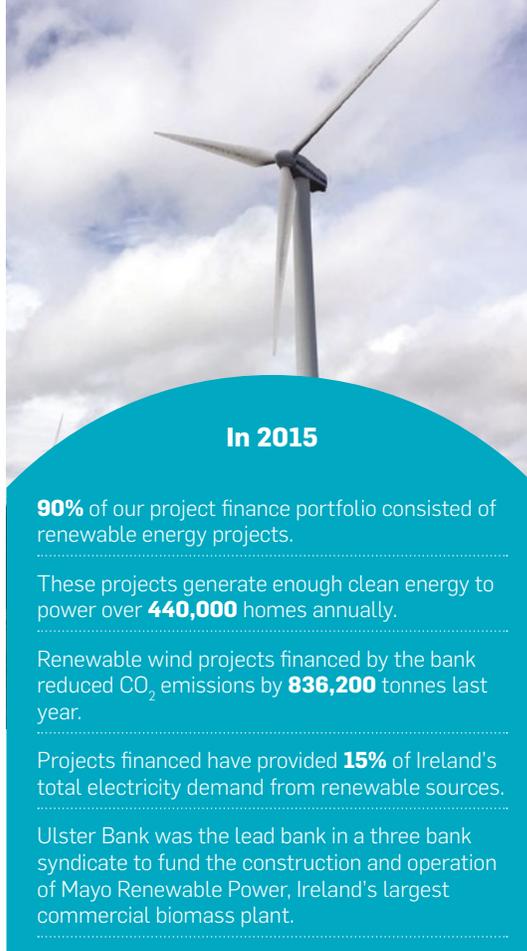
Lending to the energy sector

The renewable energy market is a growing and dynamic sector, and one in which Ulster Bank plays a strong role as financier for many leading renewables projects. We have a specialist project finance team in place for over a decade, with considerable expertise in this sector, working to meet the needs of our clients and to support government targets on renewable energy.

We partner with clients who have a well established track record on renewables projects including Bord na Mona/Coillte's Sliabh Bawn wind project, a large-scale development in Co. Roscommon which is expected to supply enough energy to power the equivalent of 37,000 households when completed in 2016.

"The Sliabh Bawn wind farm project will provide a community benefit fund for the local communities around this region, to help fund sustainable community developments over the lifetime of the project. This initiative has been realised with Ulster Bank, providing a good team of sector specialists to successfully finance the project."

Mary Lynch, Wind Energy Programme Manager, Coillte



In 2015

90% of our project finance portfolio consisted of renewable energy projects.

These projects generate enough clean energy to power over **440,000** homes annually.

Renewable wind projects financed by the bank reduced CO₂ emissions by **836,200** tonnes last year.

Projects financed have provided **15%** of Ireland's total electricity demand from renewable sources.

Ulster Bank was the lead bank in a three bank syndicate to fund the construction and operation of Mayo Renewable Power, Ireland's largest commercial biomass plant.

Our direct environmental impact

Ulster Bank is committed to reducing the environmental impact of serving our customers and positively influencing those with whom we do business. In 2015, we participated in a bank-wide target review and committed, with our colleagues in Britain, to a series of new environment targets covering carbon, water and waste. These targets involve collaboration with colleagues and suppliers and sit alongside pre-existing targets covering paper and business travel.

Here is a snapshot of our progress against our 2020 goals. In line with the rest of RBS, where we have exceeded our targets ahead of 2020, we are reviewing and implementing more aggressive targets.

Environmental Impact Area	2014 Baseline usage	By 2020 reduction target	2015 progress reduction against baseline
Carbon emissions*:	14,473 tCO ₂ e	-20%	-10%
Energy use:	36 GWh	-15%	-5%
Water use:	40,599 m ³	-5%	-21%
	2011 Baseline usage		
Paper use:	501 Tonnes	-50%	-68%

*Total Scope 1 & Scope 2 CO₂e emissions.



Determined to make a difference for our colleagues

Key engagement outcomes 2015

Overall Engagement Index	up 6 points to 77%	↑
Leadership Index	up 8 points to 74%	↑
Effective managers	up 3 points at 79%	↑
Empowerment	up 5 points at 78%	↑
Developing people	up 6 points at 66%	↑

"We've always looked out for our customers but we weren't always consistent. 'Determined to Lead' is all about having a common standard and delivering consistently great service for our customers. When you marry this up with our People Leader Forum and Living our Values – that's very motivating for our staff – everyone wants to work for a business that's got a great reputation and does the right thing by its customers."

Justin Healy, Branch Manager, Killarney

Engaged colleagues are more likely to deliver great service and do the right thing by our customers who, in turn, will trust us with more of their business. That's why we invest in the wellbeing of our people and their personal and professional development. These are issues that matter to colleagues, and help us build a culture where people feel valued, motivated and engaged.

Determined to lead

2015 was the 'Year of Leadership' across both RBS and Ulster Bank, with the roll out of **Determined to lead** – a bank-wide investment in leadership development to embed the capabilities and techniques to deliver consistently great service. It sets consistent expectations for our people managers on how we lead, work together and deliver for our customers. 85% of our people managers have undertaken modules 1 and 2 in 2015, with follow up coaching support and a third module in plan for 2016.

We are also embedding a culture of strong leadership through our **People Leader Forum** – bringing together 900 line managers across our business to help them lead and influence high performance in their teams. A key element is giving those leaders who manage people regular opportunities to engage with and learn from senior leaders and each other. We do this through a

series of regional breakfast networking events, where they meet face to face with our CEO and senior leaders, and participate in discussions themed on Living our Values, engaging our teams, building customer trust and making a difference to our communities.

To maximise local engagement, these events are scheduled to occur on the same day as our Chief Executive roadshows, when our CEO and senior leaders share our strategy and engage colleagues throughout all parts of the bank in open discussions on how to improve our business. 29 CEO and senior leader roadshows took place in 2015. This collaboration between those leaders who manage people, our CEO and other colleagues is a powerful way to build shared values and empower managers as leaders.

These initiatives have led to strong improvements in our engagement scores among those who lead people – up from 77% in 2014 to 83% in 2015 – and among the rest of our colleagues from 70% to 75%.

Determined to make a difference

In 2015 RBS and Ulster Bank launched an inspiring internal campaign '**Determined to make a difference**' to bring our purpose to life and embed positive culture change. It's focussed on how we can achieve great outcomes for our customers, colleagues, communities and – ultimately – our shareholders.

**"Determined to
make a difference.
That's what we are."**



Ross McEwan
Chief Executive

Our five promises 2015

1 Invest in our people's development and professional standards



500% increase

in professional qualifications via **New Horizons** programme. Investment of **€770k** and over **1,000** qualifications

Over 2,900

Delegates received key capability requirements training.

380 people completed **Helpful Banker**



2 Create people leaders' forum to support line managers



900+ people leaders

completed 'Determined to lead' module 1 and 2

20 people leader development sessions

6 issues of 'Leading People' to **900+** people leaders



15 people leader breakfasts
400+ attendees

3 Promotes balance, flexibility and wellbeing



UB Choice survey:

Based on a sample of 2,000 employees **84%** said their team culture supports flexible working.

91% more likely to stay with UB if they can work flexibly

During the Wellbeing fortnight



3,200 web page views
8 audios

6 webinars

10 face-to-face sessions

10 blogs and video blogs, MOPs, DOFTs and much more.

4 Ensure clear performance goals and transparent reward process



Published salary scales and matrices to promote transparency

Common objectives across customer, risk, data and people



360° feedback available to all people leaders.

5 Live up to our values



Opportunity to share and explore our values as part of the **2015 Executive Road Shows**

897 colleagues recognised for **Living our Values**

12 shortlisted for the RBS Living our Values awards
1 bronze winner

76% Living our Values, our view score up **11 points**.

Learning and development

Business and personal customers expect bank staff to be professional, helpful, knowledgeable and appropriately qualified. Building a culture of continuous learning is a strategic priority for the bank and enables employees to thrive in their jobs and better serve the needs of our customers.

Ulster Bank's Academy is the bank's centre of expertise for employee learning and development – whether mandatory courses, role-specific or personal development training.

Supplementing the Academy, all employees have access to leading-edge courses from Harvard Business School, Skillport and getAbstract through the RBS Learning Management System.

Employees can therefore tap into a very wide range of learning opportunities and direct their own learning at a time, pace and place that suits them – whether it's digital, face to face, webinars, videos, podcasts, coaching or on the job experience.

Mandatory training on policies and processes that keep our people, customers and the bank safe, are delivered online via our shared RBS e-learning platform. This ensures equal access for all employees, and monitors and alerts us to any non-compliance.

A wide range of professional training programmes certified and validated by external institutions – are available to colleagues at all levels. We launched 'New Horizons' last year – an education fund to encourage our people to explore the professional qualifications available to them, what's mandatory for their roles and the support Ulster Bank provides as their sponsor. We also encouraged take-up through:

- **Flightpath** – a dedicated portal with extensive information and resources to support colleagues' career development.
- **Text alerts** to ensure employees are aware of and can easily access relevant learning and development opportunities tailored to their roles.
- **Learning Bank** – a bi-monthly online newsletter with bite-size learning articles and links to external learning resources.

These and other initiatives were promoted extensively during Learning at Work Week – the first bank-wide learning event promoting opportunities accessible to everyone.

Awards and recognition

Ulster Bank won two prestigious awards from the Irish Institute of Training and Development



Best Overall Learning and Development Organisation



Best Learning & Development Organisation – Large Companies

The awards reflect the innovative and strategic learning approach of Ulster Bank's Training Academy in supporting our business throughout 2015. The Academy team were shortlisted for five awards in total and underwent a rigorous assessment and interview process.

Employee wellbeing

Work-life balance, flexibility and wellbeing are integral to employee engagement and to making our bank an even better place to work. We focused in 2015 on embedding our Choice flexible working options. Many of our leaders actively promoted their own flexible working choices as a key part of that. By year end, based on a sample of 2,000 employees, 84% said the culture in their team supports flexible working, 91% said they were more likely to stay with Ulster Bank as a result of Choice.

To mark Wellbeing Fortnight in August, we launched a new Wellbeing intranet portal, bringing together a range of resources on the themes of healthy eating, physical activity, managing change, resilience and flexible working options. A number of our executives shared their wellbeing tips through video blogs and audios. As a result we saw a 9% increase in Our View wellbeing scores compared to 2014.

We also launched a number of specific wellbeing initiatives to support our people leaders, including:

- **Managing change:** up-skilling people leaders to lead their teams through change.
- **Mentoring:** highlighting the resources available for people leaders as mentors and mentees.
- **Wellbeing development:** sessions included *Building resilience*; *Returning to work after maternity leave* and *Mindful Leadership*.





Determined to make a difference for our communities

For the past ten years we've focused investment in three areas which complement our business, leverage our core skills and support inclusive economic growth.

We've been part of our local communities for generations, investing in strategic programmes of long-term value that strengthen the communities we serve. One of our biggest assets is the great community spirit of our people in volunteering, fundraising and sharing their skills to help others succeed.



Supporting financial capability – especially through helping young people learn about money, banking and budgeting.



Giving a head start to budding entrepreneurs and business start-ups.



Making it easy for colleagues and customers to give to the good causes that matter to them.

Community in numbers – our 2015 all-island impact

Over £770,000 (€1,061,000) invested in local communities

Financial education

259

new teachers registered for **MoneySense**

1,750 teachers registered to date



6,493 students

enjoyed financial education classes



604 lessons delivered by our volunteers

Supporting enterprise, employment and social impact

Skills and Opportunities Fund

awarded grants of **£220,000 (€303,000)**

10 community organisations



34 Ulster Bank volunteers delivered Quickstart Business Startup lessons to **1,199** students

Employee Giving and Volunteering

Throughout 2015, people across Ulster Bank have given time, money and focus to local communities

£312,000 (€430,000)

Raised for **14** charities during One Week in June 2015



£122,500 (€169,000)

Community Cash Back

£115,350 (€159,000)

Payroll Giving



8,611 Volunteer hours

1,127 Days

Ulster Bank won the prestigious Outstanding Achievement in Corporate Social Responsibility award last year from Chambers Ireland – reflecting the bank's sustained commitment to responsible business practices over many years.

This award builds on the recognition we received in 2014 through the Business Working Responsibly Mark in the Republic of Ireland and the CORE Mark in Northern Ireland – the highest CSR accreditations available in our respective markets.

Chambers Ireland Outstanding Achievement in Corporate Social Responsibility award 2015



Supporting financial capability

MoneySense is our online, interactive and free financial education programme for schools, and has helped over 50,000 students since 2007 to learn about money, budgeting, borrowing and saving.

In 2015, we've worked to improve and refresh *MoneySense* to ensure it is relevant and fun for young people. We've consulted with teachers, curriculum planners, the Personal Financial Education Group in the UK, students and parents, resulting in exciting new resources already available.

Further materials are being phased in during 2016, including resources for younger children and supporting materials to help parents get involved.

MoneySense is now used regularly in around 60% of secondary schools island-wide. A key reason for its popularity is the impact of our *MoneySense* volunteers. During the year they delivered 604 lessons, sharing their core skills with teachers and students throughout Ireland.



Reflecting the bank's ongoing investment and consistent focus on financial education, *MoneySense* has won several CSR awards in recent years, including last year's Community Volunteering Award at Chambers Ireland Corporate Social Responsibility Awards



Case Study Students teach Ministers about money

Every year our stakeholders tell us they'd like to see banks do more to help people understand money and banking. We continue to do all we can to make people aware of the resources we provide to help young people learn about money and banking through *MoneySense*.

In March 2015 we took *MoneySense* out of the classroom and brought our free financial education programme to the Northern Ireland Assembly. The then Assembly Education Committee hosted the Financial Education and Enterprise event, with Ministers and MLA's enjoying free lessons in money management and starting a business from students of Ulidia Integrated College, Carrickfergus and our own *MoneySense*

team. With a mix of fun activities on managing money and business pitches to Dragons Den judges, the Long Gallery at Parliament Buildings came alive to the benefits of budgeting and finance.

"Basic finance and business skills are essential to a modern economy. The *MoneySense* initiative is an excellent opportunity for schools to supplement their current curriculum and teach real-life employability skills. The Committee welcomes this innovative programme."

Michelle McIlveen (former) Chairperson of the Education Committee 2015.

Supporting enterprise and innovation in our communities

In early 2015 we launched the Skills and Opportunities Fund – a UK and Republic of Ireland fund providing £2.5million of grants each year to projects that support employment, enterprise and education in disadvantaged communities. Ulster Bank has committed to provide grants worth £220,000 (approximately €300,000) per year to help people learn new skills, find employment or start a business. During the year we awarded funding to ten organisations, impacting approximately 2,247 people – with 1,981 benefiting from increased confidence, 405 qualifications gained, 47 people into employment, 21 jobs created and five businesses started.

In Northern Ireland we renewed our partnership with The Prince's Trust's Enterprise Programme, pledging to continue our support for disadvantaged and unemployed young people in starting their own business. Our support since 2009 amounts to £283,000.

Every year, more and more women take the step of starting their own business. Women are also taking up senior roles in established small and medium enterprises and Ulster Bank's Business Women Can programme supports female entrepreneurship and female business leaders. Our internal and external ambassadors are trained to offer guidance to women in business through a collaboration of online and local face to face support.



"It was great to have the Ulster Bank team here to work with the students. They've learned so many useful skills and it's given them more confidence in how to manage money."

Gráinne Berrill, WALK Coordinator

Case Study WALK project in Louth

WALK is a community organisation that supports young people with disabilities to successfully transition from education into the world of work. With grant support from our Skills and Opportunities Fund, 53 students were given the opportunity to learn about business, practise their CV writing and interview techniques and learn how to manage money amongst many other new life-skills to prepare them for young adulthood.

Jill Smyth from our Community team and local Branch Managers Wendy Taylor and Niamh Gorham, ran a series of *MoneySense* workshops for the students and their parents, with a focus on practical money management, how to use an ATM, balance your account, understand debit cards and look after your PIN.



Supporting Young Social Innovators

Young Social Innovators (YSI) is a unique education initiative that engages thousands of students each year to tackle the social issues they are passionate about. It is Ireland's largest social innovation programme and one of the few programmes of its kind anywhere in the world.

In 2015 we began our new partnership with YSI. Our support will see students throughout Ireland showcasing their innovation projects at Speakout events and pitching for commercial funding through the Innovation Dens. These events culminate in the Young Social Innovators of the Year Awards in May 2016, when over 6,500 students and their teachers from throughout Ireland will come together to celebrate the national winners.

This partnership builds on our strong legacy of support for education, while also focusing on the future where innovation in all its forms is shaping Ireland's social and economic landscape.

Supporting good causes

We know that many of our customers and colleagues want to support good causes they care about. We've put in place a number of schemes to make this easy. We also provide financial and in-kind support to increase the overall impact.

One Week in June

One Week in June has become our annual bank-wide fundraising campaign to raise money for good causes. Our branches, business centres and departments take on a range of fundraising events large and small, and in 2015 we raised **£312,000 (€430,000)** for **14 charities** island-wide.

Community Cashback

For every **£/€250** our employees fundraise in their own time, or every **20 hours** of volunteering for their chosen charity or community organisation, they can apply for a Community Cashback award of the same amount, payable to their chosen charity. Last year **490** charities island-wide received **£122,500 (€169,000)** in Community Cashback awards thanks to the fundraising and volunteering of our employees.

Payroll Giving – Staff Charity Fund

Our people have always been generous with their time and money, that's nowhere more evident than the Staff Charity Fund. Each year hundreds of colleagues donate via payroll either to a single charity of choice, or to the Staff Charity Funds. The schemes, which are run by voluntary committees of staff in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland, have been in operation for five decades, and have **735** contributing members supporting hundreds of charities each year – especially small local charities who often struggle to compete for funding. During 2015 colleagues donated a total of **£106,648 (€147,175)** through payroll giving to **77 charities** island-wide.

Give a Day

Many of our employees want to support good causes as part of their day job, and we encourage them to get involved whenever they can – whether that's sharing their finance skills through *MoneySense* or helping a good cause of their own choice. Our recorded volunteering during work hours in 2015 was **1,127** volunteer days – an increase of **192** days on 2014.

Three colleagues reached new heights for One Week in June

Most people board an aircraft with the intention of flying from one airport to another but Andrew Wilson, Kris Pike and Shane McKernan had different plans in mind when they arrived at the Wild Geese Parachute Centre in Garvagh. Together the men, from across our mortgage channels, raised an impressive £2,077 for One Week in June by bravely taking on the 13,000ft tandem skydive for a once in a lifetime experience.



Determined to make a difference for corporate stakeholders

As a leading bank in our markets, we support economic recovery by providing the products and services that help people to manage money, buy homes and create businesses. Our success as a company is dependent on the financial health of our customers and the communities we live and work in. When they prosper, so do we.

Putting our customers' needs at the heart of our business is essential for our sustainability – and theirs – in the long term. This mutual dependency requires that we stay focused on running our business responsibly, being honest about our challenges and treating our customers fairly. Ultimately that's how we will continue to prosper and grow our business into the future.

Our Big 5 goals for 2016

In light of our recent business re-structuring, we've set a number of clear goals for our business in the Republic of Ireland to ensure we make a difference to our customers, colleagues and communities in 2016. Priorities for Ulster Bank in Northern Ireland will be embedded within the goals set for RBS Personal and Business Banking in the UK.



Increase new lending to €2.5bn to help people buy their homes and grow their businesses



Improve our retail NPS* by 4 points, our business NPS by 6 points



Employee engagement scores at or above the global high performing norm of 81%



Support customers to embrace mobile banking, with a target to increase uptake by 30%



Raise €0.5m for cancer care through our One Week in June campaign

*Customers are asked how likely they would be to recommend their bank to a friend or colleague, and respond based on a 0-10 scale with 10 indicating 'extremely likely' and 0 indicating 'not at all likely'. Customers scoring 0-6 are termed detractors and customers scoring 9-10 are termed promoters. NPS is established by subtracting the proportion of detractors from the proportion of promoters.

Sustainability Governance at Ulster Bank

Sustainability is central to all our decisions as a responsible business. In recognition of this, sustainability issues are built into our business-as-usual decision-making through the Republic of Ireland Forum and Northern Ireland Forum. These are executive led decision-making bodies with representatives from the key business areas of the bank that meet monthly to monitor, manage and oversee our business operations and decisions. Progress and performance is reported to our Executive Committee and Board, and in turn to RBS as part of the independently audited sustainability reporting process.

You can read more about our support at:

www.ulsterbank.ie/sustainability

www.ulsterbank.co.uk/sustainability

Ulster Bank

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