

## Communion Spending Jumps to Eight-Year High of €929: Ulster Bank Survey

- Spending on Communion-related items and activities jumps 8% year-on-year to reach €929
- Parents spent an average of €218 on a child's communion outfit, up €56 or 35% on 2018
- Children received €617 on average this year, up 10%, with almost a quarter receiving more than €800
- 62% of respondents think that their child received too much money, while one-in-five (19%) believe that their child should contribute towards the cost of the day
- Almost three-in-five (59%) of parents spoke to their child about money before Communion

**24<sup>th</sup> June 2019:** Parents are now spending an average of €929 on their child's Communion Day, the highest spend recorded since 2011 in the annual Ulster Bank Communion Survey, when it was €967. The 2019 figure also represents a substantial increase of €69, or 8%, on 2018.

The biggest increase was in the amount spent on Communion outfits for children, with the figure jumping 35% from €162 to €218. Spending on outfits for other family members was also up 27%, from €153 to €195, while spending on party food and drink was up a more modest 2%, from €349 to €357. Spending on makeup and hair for girls also increased marginally on 2018, from €35 to €41. Conversely, parents spent less on children's entertainment this year, with that figure dropping 26%, from €161 to €119.

Regarding overall attitudes to Communion spending, there has been a notable drop in the number of respondents who agree that there is pressure to spend as much money on the day as other parents. Just over two fifths (41%) of parents say there is pressure to do so, compared with over half (53%) of respondents in 2018.

### Money received

The average amount of money received by children for their Communion this year was €617 up 10% from €558, with almost a quarter (23%) receiving more than €800.

Communion Day is traditionally the first time that children receive a significant amount of money, and almost two-thirds (62%) of parents think that their child received too much money. On average, girls received more money than boys, at €646 versus €587; however both genders saw a marked increase on 2018's figures, up €69 and €46 respectively.

### Saving

Nine out of ten respondents to the 2018 Communion Survey said that they spoke to their child about the money they received and how they might spend it, either in the run up to Communion Day (59%) or shortly afterwards (31%). The vast majority of respondents (81%) say some of the money their child received from their Communion will be put into a savings account in their own name. For some 24% of those making their Communion in 2019, this will be the first time they have had a savings account.

Commenting, Elizabeth Arnett, Head of Corporate Affairs in Ulster Bank, said:

*“It’s important for children to learn good habits from an early age, not least when it comes to spending and saving money. As most of us are well aware, Communion is the first time that many children end up with a large amount of money, and a burning desire to spend it! But we believe that it is also the perfect opportunity for parents to teach them the importance of financial planning as a life skill. It’s encouraging to see from the survey that 90% of parents talked to their child about the money they might receive and how they might use it.*

*“Conversations like these are key and Ulster Bank helps to build on this through its MoneySense programme in schools around the country. Using games, quizzes, videos and vox pops, it helps to make spending and saving more relatable to children. According to the survey, over 7 in 10 children already had a savings account with money received from Christmas and birthdays, so that’s a strong base to build on.”*

Almost three-in-five (58%) parents believe that their child should be financially educated ahead of their Communion Day. The majority (69%) of respondents believe they themselves should be responsible for educating their child, while 17% think that schools should be responsible and 23% want financial planning to be taught by a mix of parents, school, church and education groups.

## **Spending**

The survey also shows that children have spent less of their Communion money when compared with 2018, with parents reporting on average that their child had spent 28% of their money to date.(39% in 2018). On a more positive note, over two-fifths (42%) of children have already shared some of their Communion money with their siblings or donated some to charity.

Of those children who have spent money to date, the most likely purchases are:

- *Toys: 42% (no change on 2018)*
- *Clothes: 29% (down 5 percentage points on 2018)*
- *Computer games: 28% (down 4 percentage points on 2018)*
- *Books: 23% (down 1 percentage point on 2018)*
- *Sweets: 18% (down 5 percentage points on 2018)*
- *Sports equipment: 18% (down 3 percentage points on 2018)*

Spending habits appeared to have changed little from generation to generation, with parents asked to remember what they spent their Communion money on. Just over 3 in 10 parents (35%) said they saved their Communion money, but of those who did spend their Communion money, toys (23%), sweets (18%), books (8%) and computer games (7%) were the most popular purchases.

## **Funding of Communions**

The vast majority of respondents funded Communion expenses from their savings again this year (91% from 89% in 2018), with others seeking assistance to meet the costs. The source of this assistance varied year on year, with the number taking out loans decreasing by 28% to 5% of respondents, while 10% of respondents sought help from family and friends. Just under one-fifth of parents (19%) believe that their child should contribute towards the cost of the day

**ENDS**

## NOTES TO THE EDITOR

### Detailed breakdown of spending by parents on Communion is as follows:

- *Child's outfit for the day: €218 (35% increase on €162 in 2018)*
- *Outfits for other family members: €195 (27% increase on €153 in 2018)*
- *Party/refreshments: €357 (2% increase on €349 in 2018)*
- *Children's entertainment: €119 (26% increase on €161 in 2018)*
- *Make-up/hair (girls only): €41 (17% increase on €35 in 2018)*

### About Ulster Bank MoneySense

Through MoneySense, our flagship financial education programme for 5-18 year olds, we have helped over 82,000 young people in Ireland since 2015 to be more financially aware. This includes more than 48,000 in 2018 alone, supported by almost 400 volunteer hours from our colleagues.

Full details of the Ulster Bank MoneySense programme are available at <https://ulsterbankroi.mymoneysense.com/home>. Ulster Bank has tailored products for young savers. Full details of the Ulster Bank urFirst savings account and the Ulster Bank urMoney account are available at <http://digital.ulsterbank.ie/personal/young-people/savings-accounts.html>

### Research

The Ulster Bank Communion Survey was carried out online among members of Empathy Research's Ideas Panel who are parents of children who have made their Communion this year. Of the 175 parents surveyed, there was a 50% boy: 50% girl ratio in the sample profile of their children. The survey fieldwork was carried out from 8th May – 30th May 2019.