

Feature Article

Welcome to this latest edition of our newsletter!

Welcome to this latest edition of our newsletter. In our first article this month, we set out our thoughts around life being about a lot more than money. We believe that investing in yourself is as important as investing in shares, bonds and other financial assets. We then take a look at some of the interesting insights that emerged from claims data recently released by Irish Life. After all, it's claims that count when it comes to financial protection products.

Finally, there is our usual mix of content that we found on the web that we think will be of interest to you.

Best wishes!

Main Articles

Investing is about more than money

We believe that as part of helping you to identify the life you want to lead, it makes sense to think far beyond the traditional boundaries that might have existed. Yes your financial plan should include goals such as when you want to retire, where you want to live and how you will transfer money effectively to your loved ones. Each of these takes careful planning and sound investment of your resources. But we believe wise investment goes far beyond investing in funds, shares and other assets. You cannot only invest in financial assets, as the most important investment is in yourself.



Traditionally the role of a financial adviser has been to help you grow your financial resources. This has evolved significantly in more recent times into a much broader role, as financial planners have developed the skills and the tools to provide a lot more value than this. Sitting at the heart of what we do now is helping you to identify the life that you want to live, and then through careful financial planning, guiding you on your financial journey to ensure you achieve your goals and dreams.

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Here are a few areas that we believe you should invest in, most of which should also find their way into your financial plan. These are in no particular order as some will be more important than others to different people.

Your health

This is a pretty obvious one, but takes an investment of time, commitment and sometimes money. Staying healthy significantly improves your quality of life, but isn't always easy. Eating the right food often takes a bit more effort and self-control, as does having a healthy social life!

Getting enough exercise is really important. For some people this is simply about walking the dog or going for a run. Others like more structure, a bit of competition and more interaction with other people. If this is what you want, join that gym, tennis club or golf club. Talk to us about what works for you so that we build all health related expenses into your financial plan. Maintaining both your physical and mental

health will have a very positive long-term impact on your financial plan.

Your learning and skills

Just because you may have that university degree or other qualification in your pocket, it doesn't mean your time for learning is over. Continuous learning and personal development will keep you sharper, more capable to face challenges in your life and will broaden your thinking and horizons. Sometimes this means reading more – reading books as opposed to only scanning through social media feeds.

Also it may take a more significant investment of time and money. Are you going to go back to college to finally do that degree you always regretted not pursuing? Or in the same vein, is there a series of short courses that you're finally going to undertake to improve your skills? Maybe you could use technology better, enabling you to be more efficient at work – this could be learning how to use social media effectively or indeed brushing up your skills with Excel. Now might be the time to make these part of your life plan, and to also build them into your financial plan.

Your partner in life

You share so much with your partner in life. Your hopes and dreams, your worries and challenges. They hear about your issues today and your perspectives about the future. They know you better than anyone else and are central to your life. So why would you not invest in them?

Of course investing in your life partner means many things. Giving them your time, your love, your listening, your best support and advice. Having their back every step of the way and helping them grow as a person. If you have children together, helping each other be the best parents you can be. It also means spending time together, doing the things you love doing as a couple. It is not unusual to see holidays, weekends away, an entertainment budget and babysitting costs appearing in a financial plan! Are they in yours?

Your passions in life

What is it that really makes you feel alive? For some people it is travelling to far-flung places, for others it's classic cars or motorbikes and for others again it is getting involved in a charity, organisation or a club. If money is stopping you from enjoying whatever your own passion is, talk to us. Let us see if we can help you achieve it, either today or in the future through better management of your finances.

We all get just one life to lead. As your financial planner, we know the important role that money plays in helping you lead the life you want. Of course we will use our skills and expertise to help you make wise decisions and best use of your financial resources at all times. However this life starts with you and what is important to you, so investing in yourself should be a central feature of your plan.

Claims are what count

As part of our financial planning conversations with you, we always bring the attention around to subjects that are not easy to think about – a serious illness or death visiting a family member or indeed yourself. We all naturally don't want to spend too long thinking about this, but unfortunately for us to do our job properly it's a subject that we simply must contemplate.



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The reason for this is because we've seen the cost of not thinking about it. We can all picture the devastation, grief and loss that accompanies a death or serious illness. However we've also seen at first hand the catastrophic financial consequences that can follow. We've seen families losing their total income and the enormous financial impacts of a serious illness where home adaptations and specialist care services are needed. We've seen family members becoming carers because there are no alternatives.

So we spend time considering the best financial products to protect you in these circumstances – the ones that work best for you, have the most appropriate benefits and that are available at the lowest

cost. All these are important considerations.

But the most important consideration is what happens when you claim.

For this reason, we were very interested to examine Irish Life's recent claims statistics, which give some insight into trends in this area.

Irish Life paid out on average €5.75 million every week for a total of 7,900 claims during 2018. This came to €299m over the year. When you dig a little deeper into the figures, there are some very interesting findings.

Living benefits made up the lion's share

Lots of people think only about pay-outs on death when they hear of protection claims. In fact 72% of the total number of Irish Life's claims in 2018 were for living benefits - lump sums for specified illnesses and regular payments for being unable to work due to illness or accident. Life assurance claims made up the balance – 28% of the total number of claims for a not insignificant amount of €119m.

Cancer is the No. 1 cause of claims

Cancer is the big issue. 2 in 3 specified illness claims were for cancer, followed by heart conditions in a distant second. Cancer also accounted for 45% of life assurance claims. Irish Life saw the level of claims rise for cancer in 2018 - up 8% for specified illness claims and 14% for life assurance claims.

The gender differences are interesting

Women remain under-insured for life assurance – only one in three life assurance claims were for women. This is a statistic that we as an industry are determined to tackle.

In terms of living benefits though, almost 75% of income protection claims were for women, who also on average claim at a younger age than men. The specified illness claims figures are more gender neutral, with 54% of the claims for men. But within this there were some interesting gender differences,

- 75% of claims for women were for malignant cancer
- There were four times more claims by men for diagnosed heart related conditions
- There were three times more claims by men for strokes.

We think the learning from this is that while women are more aware of and financially protect themselves against getting ill, more needs to be done to raise awareness of the need for women to financially protect their loved ones against their death.

Claims are what count. Having that certainty that if such an event is visited upon you, the key is to know that financial pressures will not be added to the problem. While we hope that you never have cause to claim for a living benefit, and that any death claim by you is in the very distant future, we want to ensure you have the right cover in place to protect you and your family. Please give us a call and we will happily discuss your financial protection needs.

How to Make Better Financial Decisions

A key financial decision people struggle to make is how to allocate savings for multiple financial goals.

How to See Beyond the 'Money FOG'

Don't let fear, obligation, or guilt control your decisions about money.

Seven ways to relieve your financial stress

Money is the primary cause of stress for one in five people, but could that change?

DALBAR: U.S. Investors Lost Twice As Much As The S&P 500 In 2018

A great piece about how investors' own behaviours really damage their financial plans.

Is Life Expectancy Falling? Really? – The Absolute Return Letter

Life expectancy would grow by leaps and bounds if green vegetables smelled as good as bacon.

Having time and patience on your side is key to investment success

"The two most powerful warriors are patience and time", wrote Russian author Leo Tolstoy.

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