



Press Release

Physical and mental health is the number one priority for 50% of the Irish public in 2021

Five in ten people in Ireland plan to make health, be it physical or mental, their focus this year. This is the primary finding of the latest survey from leading protection specialist Royal London, which revealed that more women (37%) than men (26%) are focused on their physical wellbeing in 2021, while slightly more men (20%) than women (17%) are focused on improving their mental health (see Appendix 1).

The nationwide survey, commissioned by Royal London and carried out by iReach earlier this year, asked more than 1,000 adults throughout the country what their primary focus was for the year ahead. For the sixth year running, health is the top priority for people, but it has increased by 10% on 2020 which means it is now the primary focus of half of all adults in Ireland. The second biggest focus for people in 2021 is career-related aspirations, such as getting a job, getting promoted or getting a pay rise (see Appendix 2).

Colette Houton, Underwriting and Claims Lead at Royal London, commenting on the survey findings said,

“It’s not surprising that one year into living through a global pandemic the top focus for 50% of people in Ireland is on either their physical (31%) or mental (19%) health. The effects of the pandemic and subsequent restrictions have altered many aspects of our lives. So, it’s understandable that while health is now the Irish public’s biggest concern, health is also people’s biggest focus. We all know the benefits of keeping physically fit and minding our wellbeing and it has become even more important to take care of ourselves during the ongoing pandemic. Finding coping mechanisms and ways to retain a sense of optimism and positivity can sometimes be a challenge, but making health a priority can be hugely effective for building resilience and improving how we feel overall. That said, while not unexpected, it is positive to see more people prioritising their health this year.*

“One fifth of people will focus on their careers (22%) this year. For some, this is borne of necessity as we know the pandemic has led to a number of people losing their jobs or working reduced hours. For others, changes in work practices may have given them food for thought, with many people potentially taking stock of their work-life balance or considering increased opportunities around working remotely.”

Ms Houton observed,

“11% of people said that travel, be it ‘seeing more of the world or moving abroad’, is their key focus for this year – although only time will tell to what extent travelling will realistically be possible due to the pandemic. Separately, 7% of people said that property-related issues, like moving, renting or buying a home are their focus, down from 9% last year. Meanwhile 4% of people are focused on matters of the heart, such as finding love, getting engaged or getting married.”

The Royal London survey findings revealed some differing views between the genders and age groupings:

- More men than women plan to focus on their career this year, 25% of men as opposed to 19% of women.
- More men (14%) than women (8%) said travel was their key focus.
- 66% of people in the 18–24-year age bracket stated that their career is their focus in 2021.
- 48% of those aged 55+ said improving their physical health would be their primary focus in 2021.
- The same amount of 18–24-year-olds (20%) and over 55s (20%) said mental health was their main focus.

Ms Houton concluded,

“Overall, our survey revealed that as a nation we are focused on our physical and mental health now more than ever. One way in which you can look after your mental well-being is through the peace of mind of financial protection. It means you can take comfort in the knowledge that you and your loved ones are financially protected should you fall ill or pass away. If you would like to know more about how you can put financial protection in place, we recommend you speak with a Financial Broker who can provide expert guidance based on your individual circumstances.”

ENDS

Sources

* Royal London, Health overtakes money as the Irish public's biggest concern in 2021 - <https://www.royallondon.ie/press-releases/2021-press-releases/February/health-top-concern-2021/>

Notes to editors

About Royal London:

Royal London has a history of protecting our policyholders and their families for over 190 years in Ireland, and we're committed to continue to do so for a long time to come. Today we are owned by The Royal London Mutual Insurance Society Limited – the largest financial life, pensions and investments mutual in the UK, with over 4,300 people, providing around 8.6 million policies and more than €164.3 billion in Group funds under management. (Figures as at June 2020).

Royal London's Irish office is based at 47-49 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.

Appendix 1

From the list below which would be your biggest focus this year?

	What gender are you?			Age Breakdowns					Where in Ireland do you live?				
	All Adults	Male	Female	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Dublin	Rest of Leinster	Munster	Connacht	Ulster (ROI)
Career related – get a job/ change jobs/ get promoted/ get a pay rise	22 %	25 %	19 %	66 %	26 %	21 %	20 %	6 %	21 %	30 %	15 %	29 %	20 %
Family related – start or grow my family	5 %	4 %	7 %	0 %	16 %	8 %	3 %	1 %	6 %	5 %	4 %	4 %	12 %
Property related – move / buy a property/ rent a property	7 %	7 %	8 %	0 %	13 %	10 %	6 %	5 %	9 %	7 %	7 %	4 %	8 %
Love related – find love/ get engaged/ get married	4 %	4 %	4 %	4 %	9 %	6 %	2 %	2 %	3 %	1 %	7 %	2 %	11 %
Travel related – see more of the world/ move abroad	11 %	14 %	8 %	0 %	10 %	10 %	8 %	18 %	10 %	10 %	13 %	15 %	7 %
Physical Health related – get in better shape/ improve diet/ get fit	31 %	26 %	37 %	11 %	14 %	26 %	40 %	48 %	31 %	31 %	34 %	32 %	24 %
Mental Health related – actively invest and look after mental health and wellness	19 %	20 %	17 %	20 %	12 %	19 %	21 %	20 %	19 %	16 %	22 %	14 %	18 %

Data in this table is rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix 2

Biggest Focus	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Category	Percentage					
Health (physical and mental)	50	40	36	32	37	40
Career	22	21	26	23	26	21
Travel	11	17	14	17	13	13
Property	7	9	10	9	8	9
Family	5	9	9	13	10	12
Love	4	4	5	6	6	5

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