



MARKET UPDATE

In March, the current US bull run in equities passed its ninth anniversary, which makes this run the second longest in history. There have been significant gains everywhere over the past nine years. Despite concerns over volatility markets have performed relatively well so far this year considering the circumstances. Markets have taken a hit but could, and probably should be worse. As we keep saying there are a number of issues to be concerned about; Brexit, Trade Agreements (or disagreements!), interest rates and inflation increases but to name a few. So while markets have not reacted as bad as they could have the outlook will continue to be stormy. Where acceptable level of growth was attainable through a medium risk portfolio before, your funds now will have to work a lot harder for the same results. So yet again we stress the importance of looking at the level of risk in your portfolio. Make sure you are aware of the exposure you may have. As always feel free to call us if you wish to review your own portfolio.

PRODUCT IN FOCUS: STRAIGHTFORWARD LIFE COVER

We know that life assurance is paramount to any financial plan. Shockingly, but unsurprisingly, 3 in 10 Irish parents with children have no protection in place AND 1 in 2 Irish adults do not have any form of life cover in place.

Life assurance should be straightforward, so here is some of the terminology used to help you clearly understand your policy:

Joint Life: This means that the policy will pay the benefit on the death of the first policyholder only.

Dual Life: The policy will pay out on death of both policy holders. There are two payments.

Indexation: This means that the premium and benefit will increase each year at a set amount (usually 3-4% per annum)

Convertible: This means that at the end of the term of your policy you can convert this to a new policy, regardless of the nature of your health at that stage.

Level Term: This does not include the convertible option. The policy will cease at the maturity date.

Mortgage Protection: The benefit on this will reduce each year generally in line with your mortgage.

Standalone Serious Illness: This means that any serious illness benefit claim will not affect the life cover benefit on the policy.

Accelerated Serious Illness: The life assurance benefit will be reduced by any serious illness claim.

You need to ensure that you have the correct type of cover in place. Have your circumstances changed since you took out your cover? Do you have the right level of cover in place? Are you paying more than you should be for the level of cover you have? Have you recently stopped smoking?

We can help you look at the options available and find the right cover suitable for your needs and budget!

PROTECTION CLAIMS STATISTICS

Most of the Life Assurance companies release their claims statistics for 2017 at this time of the year. While only some of these have been released the figures we have received from Irish Life makes for some interesting reading!

In 2017, they paid out a total of €129.7m in death claims. €4.84m of that was for claims in Limerick with the average age of the claimant being 62. Nationally, cancer was the biggest cause of death claims. Over half of women died from cancer compared to 34% of men.

Irish Life also paid out over €53.7m in Serious Illness claims. €1.28m of that was paid for claims made in Limerick alone with the average claimant being 53 years of age. Over a third of national claims were paid to those under age 50 and over 84% of men claims for heart related illnesses.

It makes one think doesn't it! We await the statistics from the other life companies soon. We will update our website with the figures when we receive them.

MORTGAGE NEWS

Mortgage approvals rose 5% in February, with first-time buyers making up just over half of total approvals during the month. Mover purchasers made up for almost 26%. There was a big jump in re-mortgage and switching approvals on a year-on-year basis. This shows loyalty to banks has gone and customers are now looking at the best rates available leading to competition between the banks, especially on fixed rates.

Be sure to check out our new website at www.olliemoranfs.com for all your financial needs!