mabs
Money Advice & Budgeting Service

Money Matters Survey 2025

About MABS

MABS, the Money Advice and Budgeting Service, is a free, independent, confidential, and non-judgemental money and debt advice service in Ireland. It helps people who are worried about money, dealing with problem debt that has become hard to manage, or who want to budget better. MABS is funded by the Government and is open to everyone. There are MABS offices around the country and a helpline (0818 07 2000) you can call for advice. MABS can help you make a budget, manage bills, deal with debt, and learn skills to understand money better. You can also find information at ***www.mabs.ie***

Abstract

In this report by the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), we present the findings of the Money Matters Survey 2025. This targeted financial literacy survey is designed to better understand the attitudes and behaviours of young people living in Ireland concerning specific topics related to money and personal finance. The Money Matters Survey was issued to students as part of the 2025 'Global Money Week' initiative, a substantial global campaign organised by the OECD/INFE (International Network on Financial Education) which aims to bring to the fore the essential role of money management education (MME) for young people worldwide. Taking into account the findings of the previous Money Matters Surveys, the 2025 report contained additional questions to ensure that it was topical and culturally relevant. Though identifying areas in need of attention, we continue to be impressed with the level of knowledge and engagement of students living in Ireland with topics related to money and financial education.

Key Findings

73.11%
Parents and family members remain the primary source of financial learning

72.03%
Amongst those who use social media as their primary source of financial learning, TikTok has strengthened its dominance as the leading social media platform availed of in this respect

34.18%
Credit Union accounts are now the most common traditional account held by respondents

92.81%
Revolut or Revolut Junior is the primary digital-only bank account held by respondents

26.01%
While most students can use an ATM **(73.99%)**, over a quarter **(26.01%)** cannot

46.64%
A large proportion of students work either part-time during school or seasonally

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List of Abbreviations

ATM	Automated Teller Machine
BNPL	Buy Now Pay Later
CCPC	Competition and Consumer Protection Commission
EU	European Union
GMW	Global Money Week
MABS	Money Advice and Budgeting Service
MME	Money management education
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
UN	United Nations

Introduction

In March 2025, 1,157 young people living in Ireland completed the third Money Matters Survey, developed and administered by the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS). The Money Matters Survey was issued to students as part of the 2025 'Global Money Week' initiative, a substantial global campaign organised by the OECD/INFE (International Network on Financial Education) which aims to bring to the fore the essential role of money management education (MME) for young people worldwide. The purpose of this targeted financial literacy survey was to gain a better understanding of the attitudes and behaviours of young people living in Ireland concerning specific topics related to money and personal finance. The survey comprised a mix of multiple-choice questions further to a number of open-ended questions. Given the voluntary nature of participation, some surveys contained incomplete responses.

The questions asked of participating students included the following (the full questionnaire is provided in Appendix A):

- where they primarily learn about money matters,
- the tools they use to access their money and personal bank accounts,
- whether they work while attending school,
- how often they save,
- levels of confidence using digital money tools and mobile apps,
- whether they shop online and how they know if websites are safe to use,
- their awareness of and use of cryptocurrencies,
- whether they feel it is important to talk about money,
- the specific money matters they would like to learn more about in the future.

This report and research project is a direct follow-up to the previous Money Matters Surveys 2022 and 2023. This 2025 report builds upon the learnings from previous research efforts to ensure that it is topical and relevant to the lived experience of young people in Ireland. This goal was achieved through the inclusion of new questions, such as:

- respondents' awareness and use of cryptocurrencies,
- the ability to use an ATM,
- whether respondents are working while attending school.

In this report, we outline the main findings from the survey within the wider context of the necessity to promote financial inclusion and the combatting of financial exclusion in Ireland. According to the World Bank (2025),[1]

> 'Financial inclusion means that individuals and businesses have access to useful and affordable financial products and services that meet their needs – transactions, payments, savings, credit and insurance – delivered in a responsible and sustainable way.'

Financial inclusion is a fundamental component to policy interventions aimed at reducing poverty and preventing over-indebtedness.[2] As such, promoting financial inclusion and money

1 Financial Inclusion Overview (worldbank.org).
2 For more on this, please see: NT MABS Building the Box Equality Report.

management education has been a central part of the mission and vision of MABS since its establishment in 1992. The holistic and client-centred service provided by MABS helps persons to cope with personal debt and take control of their own financial wellbeing.

Today, MABS operates from over 60 offices nationwide and is funded and supported by the Citizens Information Board. There are currently 10 Companies in the MABS network – 8 Regional Companies (North Dublin MABS, Dublin South MABS, North Connacht & Ulster MABS, North Leinster MABS, North Munster MABS, South Connacht MABS, South Leinster MABS and South Munster MABS), National Traveller MABS and MABS Support CLG.

We would like to thank all MABS staff who support MABS on-going commitment to promoting money management education across Ireland, as well as those who contributed specifically to the distribution and collection of the Money Matters Survey as part of Global Money Week in 2025. This research would not have been possible without the continuous efforts and dedication of front line MABS staff around the country.

Financial Literacy in Ireland: Policy and Research

At the time the Money Matters Survey 2023 was being was being conducted, Ireland's Department of Finance announced that it would be leading the development of a 'National Financial Literacy' Strategy based on the recommendations made in the Department's review of the retail-banking sector published in November 2022. As of the 20th of February 2025, Ireland's first National Financial Literacy Strategy was published.[3] The publication of this strategy ultimately implements the Organisation on Economic Development and Co-operation (OECD) recommendation that governments 'establish and implement national strategies that take a sustained, co-ordinated approach to financial literacy.'[4] The mission of this five year strategy is to 'improve the level of financial literacy in Ireland' achieved by way of 'co-operating with everyone involved in the financial literacy ecosystem, and co-ordinating our work to support greater overall financial wellbeing and resilience.'[5]

Though the publication of Ireland's National Financial Literacy Strategy is welcomed and acknowledges the importance of developing financial capability from an early age as well as the need to better understand and research children and young people's financial experiences, references to this cohort throughout the Strategy remains relatively limited. This absence of focus in the Strategy's scope is interesting in light of the Mapping Report (conducted in advance of the Strategy's publication) having considered children and young people as constituting one of the five areas of focus.[6] The Mapping Report endorses financial education as early as possible, with the educational curriculum to be maximised in this respect. Furthermore, it specifies that there is a need to support those who have left secondary education within the context of financial education and calls for an increase in relevant information regarding the financial literacy of young people, particularly data that is internationally comparable. Though the Financial Literacy Strategy places a stronger emphasis on adult financial literacy, on the same day of its publication, the Department of Finance also published 'Financial Education in Schools: Guidelines for the Financial Services Industry'.[7] It is the aim of these guidelines to improve 'financial literacy, financial resilience and overall financial wellbeing for children and young people.'[8] While the publication of these guidelines is a positive development, when considered alongside the National Financial Strategy, it is apparent that there continues to be a need for information specific to children and young people within this context.[9] This Money Matters Survey therefore compliments the aspirations of both the National Financial Literacy and Guidelines as it provides empirical data gathered from children and young people with the overall aspiration of enhancing financial literacy amongst children and young people.

3 gov.ie – Minister Donohoe publishes Ireland's first National Financial Literacy Strategy (www.gov.ie).
4 OECD Legal Instruments - Recommendation of the Council on Financial Literacy.
5 Government of Ireland – National Financial Literacy Strategy 2025 – 2029.
6 Government of Ireland – Financial Literacy in Ireland: Evidence Base for a National Strategy.
7 gov.ie – Financial Education in Schools: Guidelines for the Financial Services Industry (www.gov.ie).
8 Government of Ireland – Financial Education in Schools.

OECD: Policy and Research

A specific financial literacy competency framework has been developed for children and youth by the European Commission and the OECD International Network on Financial Education (OECD/INFE).[10] This is a follow-on framework to the joint 'EU/OECD-INFE financial competence framework for adults in the European Union', published in January 2022.[11] It is the aim of the children and youth framework to 'build a common understanding of financial literacy competences for children and youth at different ages and across different stages of their formal education, which will facilitate the sharing of best practices and make financial literacy measures more effective across the EU.'[12] In light of the absence of a dedicated children and youth financial strategy in Ireland, this framework is a valuable source of guidance. Furthermore, it aligns with the ethos of the Money Matters Survey, whereby there is a concern with ascertaining and improving the financial literacy of this cohort. This position is demonstrated through the learning objectives and educational materials for young people included in Global Money Week and other financial educational initiatives undertaken by MABS closely aligning with the goals and abilities outlined in the OECD/INFE competency framework.

Extensive research has been conducted by the OECD on the financial literacy of children and youth internationally. Published by the OECD in 2024 was the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 results.[13] The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test was taken by nearly 700,000 students from 81 OECD member and partner economies. There was also an optional financial literacy assessment, which was taken by almost 100,000 students from 20 OECD member and partner economies. A seminal result from this study was that on 'average across OECD countries and economies, 18% of students performed at or below Level 1. These students can, at best, recognise the difference between needs and wants, make simple decisions about everyday spending and recognise the purpose of everyday financial documents, such as an invoice.' While students proficient at Level 1 display basic financial literacy skills, they are 'not yet able to apply their knowledge to real-life situations involving financial issues and decisions.' Due to the day-to-day challenges encountered in this respect, it is desirable that education initiatives aim to target and limit the number of persons who fall within the Level 1 category. Although this optional financial literacy assessment covered a broad range of countries, Ireland did not participate. It must be said, however, that the National Financial Literacy Strategy recognises the shortfall in failing to take part and encourages future participation in the optional measure, a position which MABS is heavily in favour of. In the absence of this PISA data, which would have offered empirical insights into the financial literacy of Irish children and young people, the Money Matters Survey plays an especially important role as it provides information of a similar kind. Prior to exploring the data obtained from the 2025 Money Matters Survey, an overview of the data collected in 2023 is provided.

9 Of further relevance to children and young people, albeit primarily focused on numerical and digital literacy, is Ireland's Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033 implementation plan. It is the purpose of Action 2.1.12 of this plan to 'Enable teachers to provide a focus on financial literacy across the curriculum at primary and post-primary level.' Government of Ireland – Ireland's Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033: Every Learner from Birth to Young Adulthood, Implementation Plan to 2028.
10 European Union/OECD (2023) - Financial competence framework for children and youth in the European Union.
11 European Union/OECD (2022) - Financial competence framework for adults in the European Union.
12 European Union/OECD (2023) - Financial competence framework for children and youth in the European Union.
13 OECD (2024) - PISA 2022 Results How Financially Smart Are Students? Volume IV.

Money Matters Survey 2023

In Table A below, we provide a brief overview of the main findings and themes from from the Money Matters Survey 2023. This survey was distributed to students as part of Global Money Week in March 2023, and the findings were published in March 2024. Approximately 1,850 young people from around the country took part in the survey with 97% of the participants aged 15-17.

Table A: Findings From Money Matters Survey 2023

Topic	Main findings
Learning about money	Survey findings reveal that 70% of young people learn about money from their parents and family members. 30% reported learning about money from social media. The most common social media website referenced was TikTok (64% of respondents) followed by Instagram (20% of respondents).
Types of personal bank accounts	75% of respondents have a bank account with An Post, Credit Union or a mainstream Irish bank. AIB was the most common provider reported by participants, followed by My Credit Union and Bank of Ireland. Revolut or Revolut Junior was by far the most common type of digital bank account for young people, with 84% of those with a digital-only bank account reporting to have one with Revolut. However, there was some confusion around this question, leading the researchers to believe that many students believe all retail banking is 'digital only', or perhaps that students interact and engage with their banking services exclusively through digital platforms.
Saving behaviours	40% of students report how they 'Sometimes' put aside their money for savings, whereas 27% specified that they 'Always' set aside money for savings.
Keeping track of money and confidence using digital tools	Over 60% of respondents are using their phones to track and manage their money. However, around 30% are using a wallet, purse, piggy bank or money jar. Using an ATM was the least common method for tracking money (around 5%), followed by a computer (around 6%). 50% of survey respondents report feeling 'somewhat confident' using financial tools, while 27% report feeling 'very confident'. Only 2% reported feeling 'extremely not confident' and 8% 'not confident'.
Shopping online	83% of students who took our survey report shopping online. Thankfully, respondents take a number of precautions when online shopping in order to ensure they are using a safe website.
Talking about money and asking for help	96% of respondents feel it is important to talk about money, and 90% feel comfortable asking for help if they have any questions or concerns.
Areas of interest for future learning	Students raised a number of important financial topics that they would be interested in learning more about in the future. These include: how to save; how to budget; how to invest; how to get a job; how to protect money; and how to manage money for college/third-level education.

Money Matters Survey 2025: Findings

In this section, we outline the findings of the most recent Money Matters Survey. We further break down these findings into the following sub-sections:

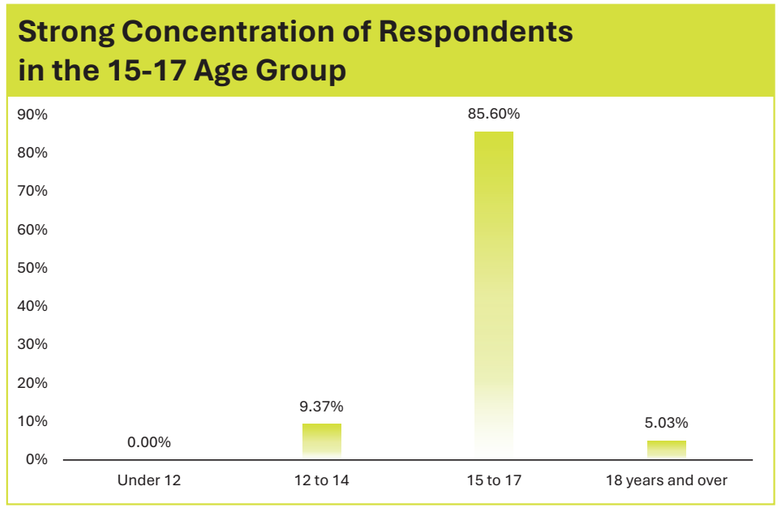
- profile of respondents (age and gender),
- learning about money,
- types of personal bank accounts (including digital-only banking),
- ability to use an ATM,
- saving behaviours,
- how students track their money and their confidence using digital tools,
- shopping online,
- awareness and use of cryptocurrencies,
- general attitudes about money and asking for help,
- personal finance topics students would like to learn more about in the future and the most interesting learning outcomes from Global Money Week 2025.

Each section includes Tables and/or Figures that illustrate the findings of the Money Matters Survey 2025. The questions in the survey were multiple choice, with some questions that permitted respondents to select multiple options that applied to them. Others included secondary 'write-in' sections. These surveys were paper surveys, and students completed them on their own. Responses were analysed and counted through SurveyMonkey. It is important to note that not all participants in the survey answered each question.

Profile of Respondents

There were 1,157 students who took part in the Money Matters Survey 2025, a decrease of 693 participants when compared with the 2023 survey. In a similar fashion to both 2022 and 2023, the 2025 survey shows a high concentration of respondents in the 15–17 age group, which accounts for 85.6% (987 respondents) of the total. This confirms that the survey primarily resonates with upper-secondary school students. Notably, the number of participants in the 12-14 age group increased from 17 respondents in the 2023 survey, to 108 (9.37%) respondents in 2025, illustrating an increased participation among younger adolescents. This is a welcome increase as it broadens the scope of the sample. In Figure 1 below, we provide an overview of the age ranges of survey respondents.

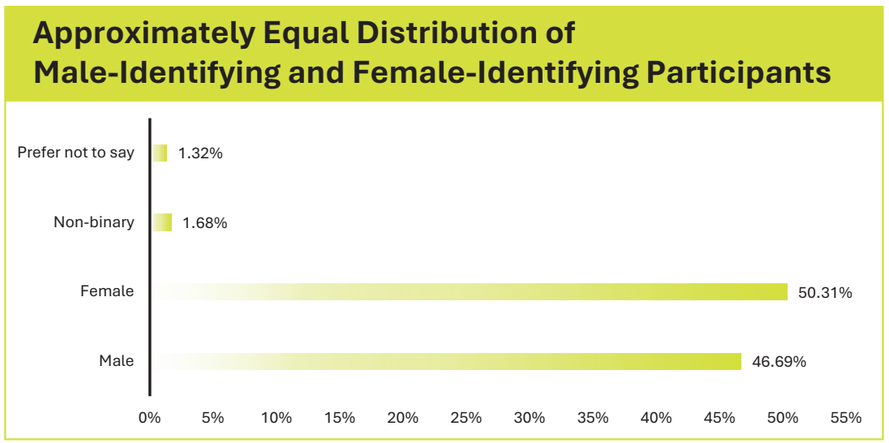
Figure 1: Age of Survey Respondents



Q: Age Range (mark 'X' where applicable).
Sample Size = 1,153

In the survey, we also asked students to identify the gender to which they self-identify (they were also allowed to leave this question blank or select 'prefer not to say'). In Figure 2 below, we provide a breakdown of the gender of the respondents.

Figure 2: Gender of Survey Respondents



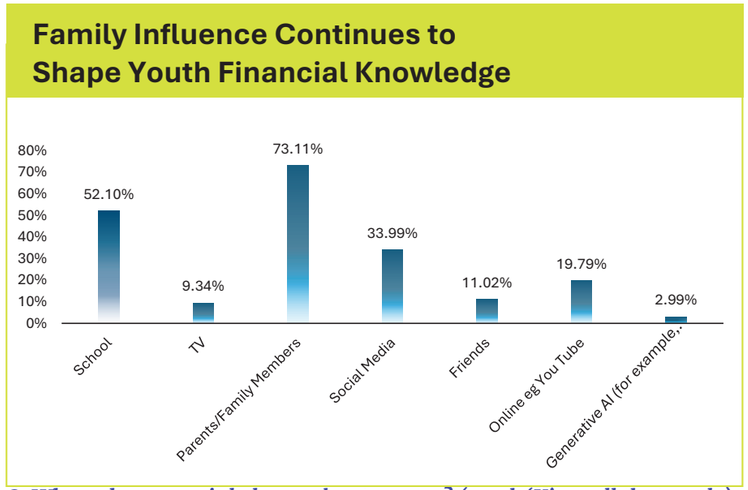
Q: Gender (mark 'X' where applicable).
Sample Size = 1,133

As illustrated in Figure 2 above, the gender of participants demonstrated a more or less equal distribution between male-identifying and female-identifying students. This spread enhances the generalisability of the data collected.

Learning About Money

The first substantive question listed in the Money Matters Survey is 'where do you mainly learn about money? (select all that apply)'. This question is particularly important in light of an increasingly complex and digital age when it comes to money and personal finance. It is necessary, in our view, to understand where young people are accessing information, both to inform targeted policy efforts to support financial literacy as well as to ensure that educational activities and efforts are reaching young people. In responding to the evolving nature of money attitudes and behaviours, the 2025 survey offered the additional option of 'Generative AI (for example, ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini)' as a potential answer. Consistent with the 2023 survey, the remaining categories for selection constituted – 'School', 'Parents/Family Members', 'Friends', 'TV', 'Online (YouTube)' and 'Social Media'. For this question, students were able to check all answers that applied to them with Figure 3 below outlining their response.

Figure 3: Learning About Money

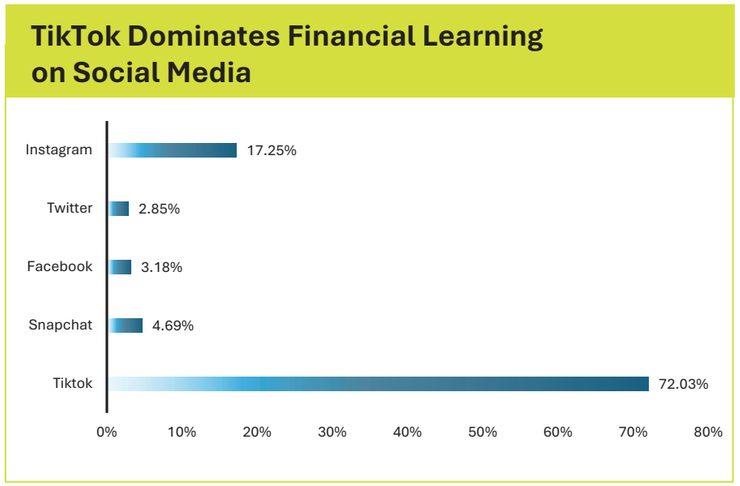


Q: Where do you mainly learn about money? (mark 'X' on all that apply).
Sample Size = 1,071

As illustrated in Figure 3, the most commonly cited response (from 783 or 73.11% of the survey participants) was learning about money matters from their parents and family members. This highlights the central role of the household in shaping financial habits and knowledge, underscoring the importance of family-based financial conversations. Over 52% (558 participants) reported that they learn about money at school. This is an approximately 11% increase from 2023 (41% of participants), which is a welcome rise in light of national and international discussions of ways and methods to encourage formal access to money management education in Irish schools and curriculums from an early age.[14] This result reflects the importance of structured educational initiatives, though still secondary to family influence. An additional 364 respondents (or approximately 34%) cited that they learn about money on social media, confirming its position as a highly influential means of learning. With regards to online platforms, 19.8% (212 respondents) learn from online video platforms, showing that self-directed, on-demand content is part of young people's financial education journey. The categories with the fewest respondents were learning about money from friends (118 respondents or 11.02%), TV (100 respondents or 9.34%), and Generative AI (32 respondents or 2.99%). Though a modest number of respondents selected Generative AI, it reflects the early adoption of AI-based platforms by young people for financial knowledge. Its presence indicates potential for future growth as these technologies become more integrated into everyday learning.

Similar to the 2023 survey, we were also interested in understanding the specific social media platforms that students living in Ireland are using to learn about money. This resulted in the inclusion of an additional follow-up question: 'If you learn about money on social media, what site do you mainly use?' The options provided were: 'TikTok', 'Instagram', 'Twitter', 'Facebook', or 'Snapchat', and students were asked to select the platform that they 'mainly use'. Figure 4 below outlines the responses.

Figure 4: Social Media Platform Used for Money Learning



Q: If you ticked Social Media, from what site do you mainly learn about money? (mark 'X' on one box only). Sample Size = 597

14 Government of Ireland – Financial Education in Schools: Guidelines for the Financial Services Industry. See also: European Union/OECD (2023) - Financial competence framework for children and youth in the European Union.

Over two-thirds (or 72.03%) of the respondents to this question answered that 'TikTok' was the social media platform on which they most commonly learn about money. Increasing from 64% in the 2023 survey, TikTok has strengthened its dominance as the leading social media platform for financial education among young people. Its short-form, accessible content appears highly effective in capturing and maintaining youth engagement, making it the central hub for financial learning on social media. Instagram remains the second most used platform at 17.25% but its popularity has declined from 20% in 2023, likely due to TikTok's uptake within this context. Significantly less referenced social media platforms by respondents to this question were: Twitter, now known as 'X' (2.85% of respondents), Snapchat (4.69% of respondents), and Facebook (3.18% of respondents).

Research from Ireland has demonstrated that learning about money matters in the home and from an early age can lead to stronger financial wellbeing later on in life.[15] It is therefore encouraging that over 70% of the respondents to this survey are learning about money from their parents and family members. It is also important to continually support and adequately resource the development of initiatives to support continual financial education in schools (such as 'Global Money Week' and 'Our Money, Our Future') and encourage the promotion of financial literacy at all stages of life, especially before adulthood.

15 CCPC – Financial Capability and Well-being in Ireland in 2018. See also: CCPC - Financial Wellbeing in Ireland: Financial literacy and inclusion in 2023.

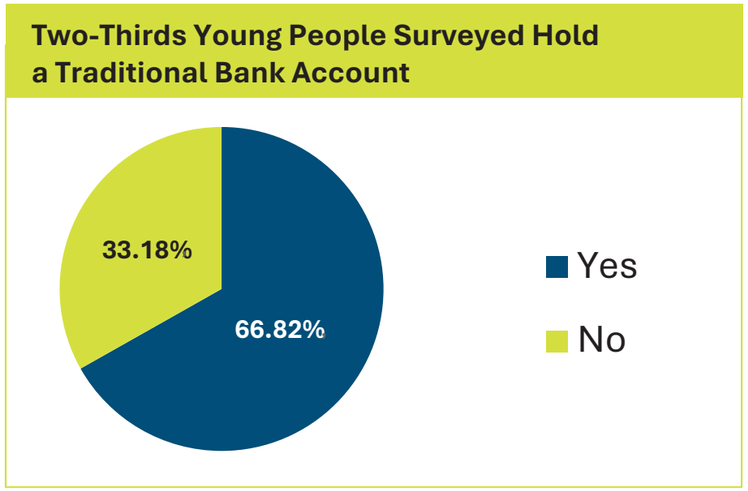
Types of Personal Accounts: Retail Banking

In this section, we outline the responses to a series of questions from the 2025 Money Matters Survey on whether or not students have access to personal banking accounts, and with which specific financial providers. These questions were designed to shed light on the impact of the narrowing market for personal accounts in Ireland and the rise of alternative digital-only banking options for personal accounts.

Traditional Account

Similar to the 2023 survey, in question 3 (see Appendix A) students were specifically asked: 'Do you have a traditional account with a bank, credit union, or An Post?' Figure 5 below outlines the responses to this question. Two-thirds of the respondents answered that they have had a traditional account.

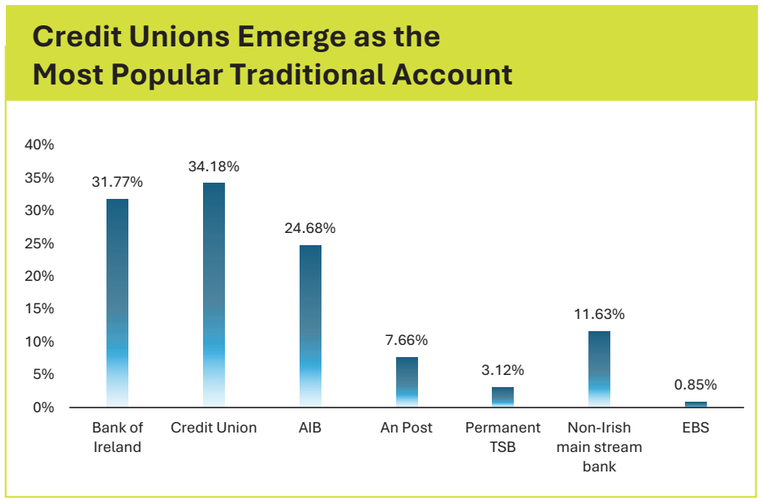
Figure 5: Ownership of a Traditional Account



Q: Do you have a traditional bank account with a bank, credit union, or An Post? Sample Size = 1,106

Question 4 asked students to further identify with which financial provider (and specified non-digital banking providers specifically) they have a personal banking account, providing the options of 'Bank of Ireland', 'AIB', 'Permanent TSB', 'EBS', 'My CU Credit Union account', 'An Post Current account' or 'Non-Irish mainstream bank'. Figure 6 below outlines the responses to this question.

Figure 6: Traditional Banking Providers



Q: If you have a traditional (non digital) bank account, please mark 'X' against which one(s) you have.
Sample Size = 705

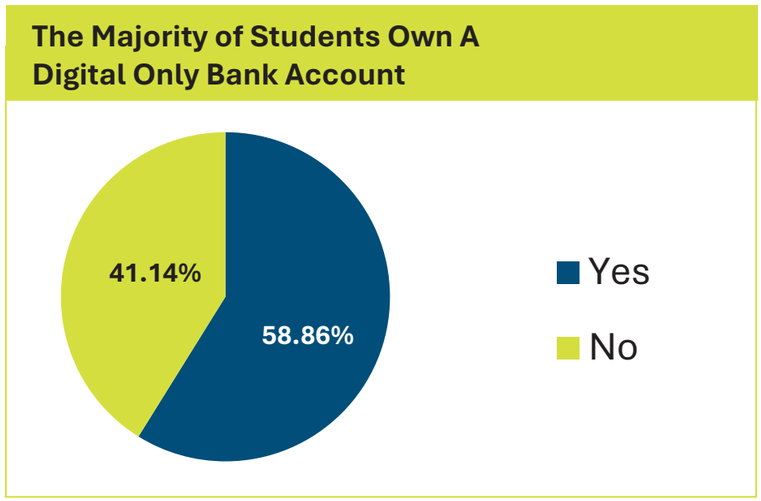
As illustrated in Figure 6 above, a credit union account was the most popular amongst survey participants with 241 respondents (or 34.18%) identifying that they have one. This result highlights the continuing (and growing) importance of credit unions as trusted entry points for young people. This is a novel observation, as in 2023, the most common traditional personal account held by participants was with AIB. AIB has since fallen to third place with its 174 (24.68%) participants being surpassed by Bank of Ireland's 224 (or 32%) participants. Despite the increase in the number of those who have a credit union account, AIB & BOI combined form the bulk of mainstream institutional access, underscoring their dominant presence in Ireland's financial landscape. As such, these traditional banks remain pivotal in youth financial access. Other traditional options hold smaller shares: 54 participants answered that they have an account with An Post; 22 with Permanent TSB; and 6 with EBS. Consistent with 2023, the 2025 survey allowed for the selection of 'Non-Irish mainstream bank' for which 82 respondents (11.63%) selected this as their main bank. This is up from 7.76% in the previous survey, reflecting a modest but notable increase in the use of non-Irish mainstream banks amongst this cohort.

Digital Account

In question 6 we asked students whether they have a 'digital only bank account'. For this question, 58.86% (598 respondents) report holding a digital-only account, compared to 41.14% (418 respondents) who do not. This result is noteworthy as in the 2023 survey, 845 students (approximately 45%) answered 'Yes' to holding a digital-only account and 1051 (55%) answered 'No'. [16] Although concerns were expressed in 2023 as to respondents understanding of a digital-only account, these results suggest that their usage amongst children and young people is growing.

16 It must be noted that in version 2 of the Money Matters Survey there was concern as to whether respondents misinterpreted the difference between 'digital only' and 'mainstream bank'. Although this issue was not eradicated entirely in version 3, the number of non-digital only banks named in the write-in section for the follow-up question was marginal.

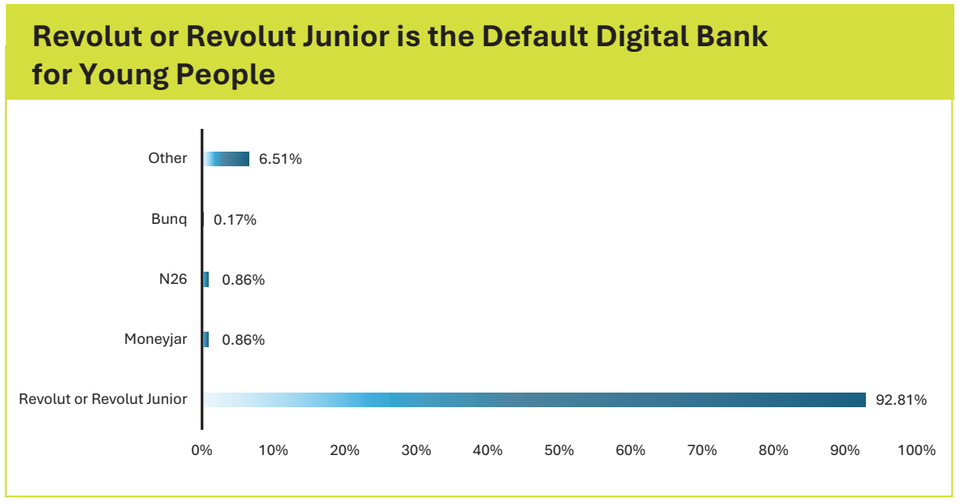
Figure 7: Ownership of a Digital Only Bank Account



Q: Do you have a digital only bank account?
Sample Size = 1,016

In order to develop a deeper understanding of digital accounts, students were asked in question 7 to specify the type of digital-only bank account they have: 'Revolut or Revolut Junior', 'N26', 'Bunq', 'Moneyjar' or 'Other' (and students were given space to write in a response to 'Other'). Figure 8 displays the survey responses below.

Figure 8: Digital Only Banking Providers



Q: If you have a digital only bank account, please mark 'X' against which one(s) you have.
Sample Size = 584

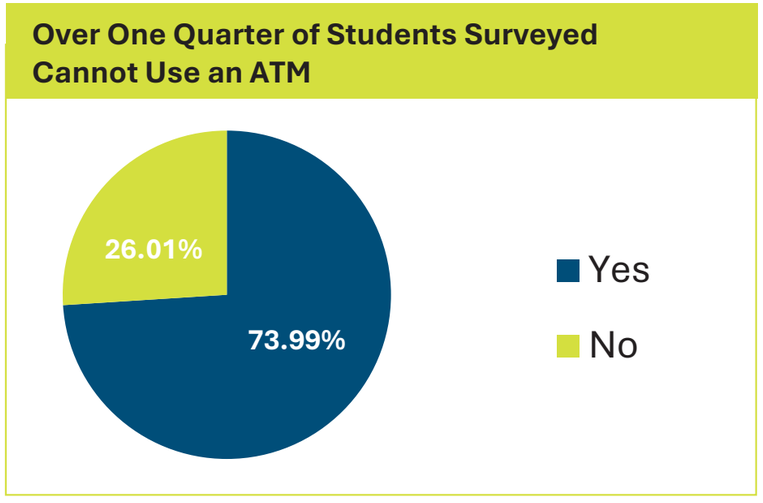
The vast majority or 92.81% of students who answered question 7 stated that they have an account with Revolut or Revolut Junior, positioning it as the default digital provider for young people. The other providers listed, Money Jar (5 respondents), N26 (5 respondents) and Bunq (1 respondent), combined for under 2% of the responses. Those not specifically named and therefore listed in the 'Other' category constituted 6.51% (38 respondents), reflecting niche or emerging platforms such as: 'BBVA', 'PayPal', 'Wise', etc. However, many of these options are, arguably, examples of financial transfer services versus personal banking options. In light of this confusion, it may be advisable to tease out the difference between personal accounts and these services in future educational activities.

Though comparably less than in 2023, certain students who selected 'Other' then preceded to write in a mainstream Irish bank as an example of a digital-only provider, specifically AIB. This signals a misinterpretation of the difference between a 'digital only' and 'mainstream bank' and perhaps reveals that a number of students presume that these pillar banks are also 'digital only' i.e. do not provide in-person services. This might also indicate that many students are using a mainstream bank and managing their money exclusively through digital tools and apps. Arguably, this ambiguity reflects the predominately digital nature of current financial services, and it is important to provide further clarity concerning the differences (and similarities) between types of financial service providers for basic banking in money management education initiatives and trainings. Despite the potential for a certain degree of confusion amongst the respondents surveyed, it is apparent that digital banking amongst children and young people is now firmly mainstream, though heavily concentrated in one provider (Revolut).

Ability to use an ATM

In this most recent Money Matters Survey, we introduced an additional question to explore young people's ability to use an Automated Teller Machine (ATM). This question was designed to gauge students' practical experience with traditional everyday banking tasks, skills that remain important even as financial services continue to digitalise. Support for this position is evidenced through the enactment of the Finance (Provision of Access to Cash Infrastructure) Act 2025 on the 20th of May 2025. A core objective of this statute is to ensure that people and businesses can continue to access and utilise cash within an increasingly digital age. A central means of progressing this objective is to require those designated entities accounted for under the legislation to maintain minimum levels of cash infrastructure such as ATM's. Ensuring accessibility to finances in multiple forms is a pivotal means of supporting financial inclusion, as such the introduction of this legislation is welcomed.

Figure 9: Ability to use an ATM



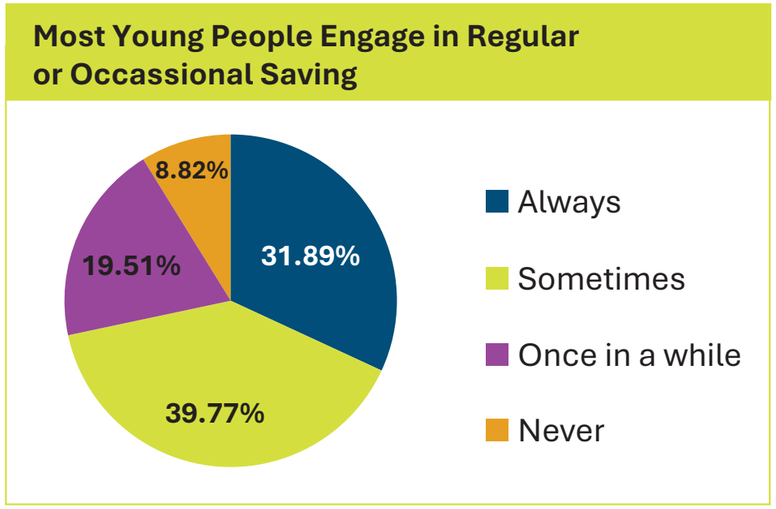
Q: Can you use an ATM?
Sample Size = 1,015

The responses revealed that while many students identified as being able to use an ATM (73.99% or 751 respondents), a notable proportion indicated that they are unable to do so (26.01% or 264 respondents). Despite broader trends within this survey illustrating that mobile apps and digital banking tools are the dominant means of managing personal finances, we view the ability to confidently use an ATM as a key component of financial literacy, ensuring that young people are equipped to handle their money safely and independently across all platforms.

Saving Behaviours

Planning and managing finances are one of the four key content areas in the EU-OECD/INFE financial competency frameworks for children and adults. 'Saving' is a central behaviour within this content area, as it involves actively putting money aside (versus immediate spending) and recognising the importance of having access to money in case of emergency. In the EU-OECD/INFE framework, saving is classified as a necessary competency particularly for children aged 16 – 18. In our survey, we asked students how often they put aside their money into savings, giving the options of 'always', 'sometimes', 'once in a while' and 'never'. The answers are presented in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10: Saving Frequency



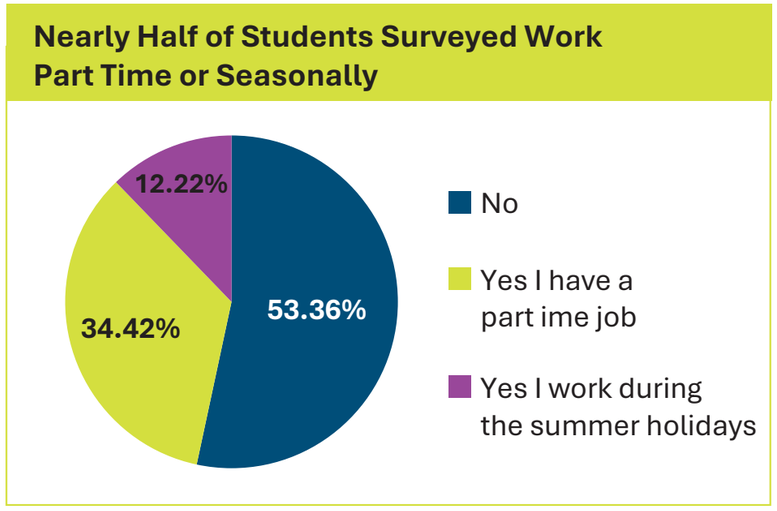
Q: When you get money, how often do you put your money aside into savings?
Sample Size = 1,066

As illustrated in Figure 10 above, 'sometimes' was the most common answer, with 39.77% (424 participants) responding that they sometimes set aside their money for savings. 31.89% or 340 participants selected that they 'Always' save, followed closely by 19.51% (208 respondents) reporting that they only save 'once in a while'. 8.82% (94 respondents) stated that they never put aside their money into savings. Overall, it is commendable that nearly three-quarters of respondents (71.7%) engage in consistent or occasional saving, demonstrating a strong orientation toward future financial planning. However, the fact that almost one in ten never save highlights a potential risk group that may require targeted education and support.

Do You Work as well as Attend School?

An additional question introduced in the 2025 Money Matters Survey was included to ascertain whether students are currently working while attending school or during school holidays. This question aimed to provide insight into young people's early engagement with earning their own income. Respondents were asked to select from the options: 'No', 'Yes, I have a part-time job', or 'Yes, I work during the summer holidays.' As illustrated in Figure 11 below, most respondents (53.36% or 524 students) reported that they do not work while attending school. However, a significant proportion balance school with employment: 34.42% (338 students) hold part-time jobs during the school year, while 12.22% (120 students) work during the summer holidays. Although over half of students are not engaged in formal work, the data highlights that 46.64% are already building financial independence through part-time or seasonal employment, a trend that contributes to early financial responsibility. MABS considers this an important area of focus for future financial education initiatives, as earning and managing one's own money plays a crucial role in building lifelong financial capability and independence.

Figure 11: Employment

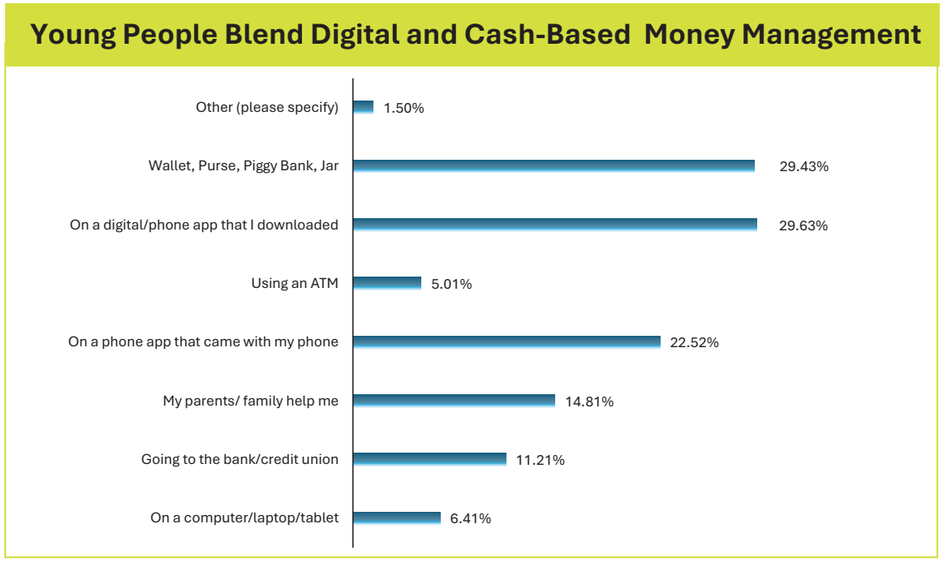


Q: Do you work as well as attend school?
Sample Size = 982

Managing Money and Confidence with Digital Tools

The next series of questions in the survey asked students how exactly they track their money. Students were asked to select the tool they use most often, however, many students selected multiple responses to this question. Possible options provided were 'on a computer/ laptop/tablet', 'on a phone app that came with my phone', 'on a digital phone app that I downloaded', 'going to the bank/credit union', 'using an ATM', 'wallet, purse, piggy bank, jar', 'my parents/family help me', or 'other'. Students were also provided with the option to write in a response to 'other' as needed.

Figure 12: Financial Tracking

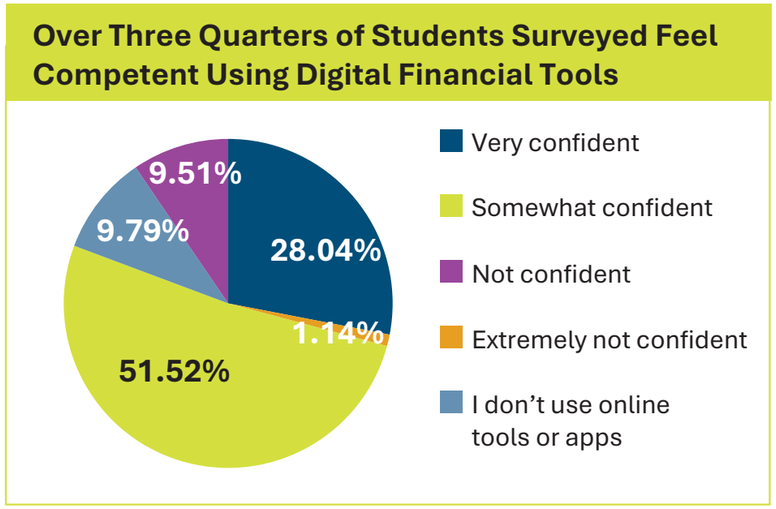


Q: How do you keep track of your money? (mark 'X' against the one you use most often).
Sample Size = 999

As illustrated in Figure 12 above, phones were the most common tool used by young people to track money with 52.15% or 521 students responding that they use either a downloaded or built-in app to track their money with their phones. This outcome reinforces the importance of digital tools in financial management. A further common method of tracking money was by wallet, purse, piggy bank or jar (approximately 30% of respondents). This finding demonstrates that a significant number of children and young people are tracking their money predominantly with coins and bills. Other responses (which were the least common at 1.5%) included, for example, 'count it' and 'on a notebook'. This data reveals that young people are comfortable mixing digital convenience with traditional methods of money management, highlighting the blended nature of financial behaviour in this age group.

This question was followed up with a direct question concerning how self-assured students feel using digital financial tools to manage their money. Due to the increased digitalisation of financial tools and personal banking, this question is important to gauge the confidence level of young people in using these products.

Figure 13: Confidence Using Digital Financial Tools



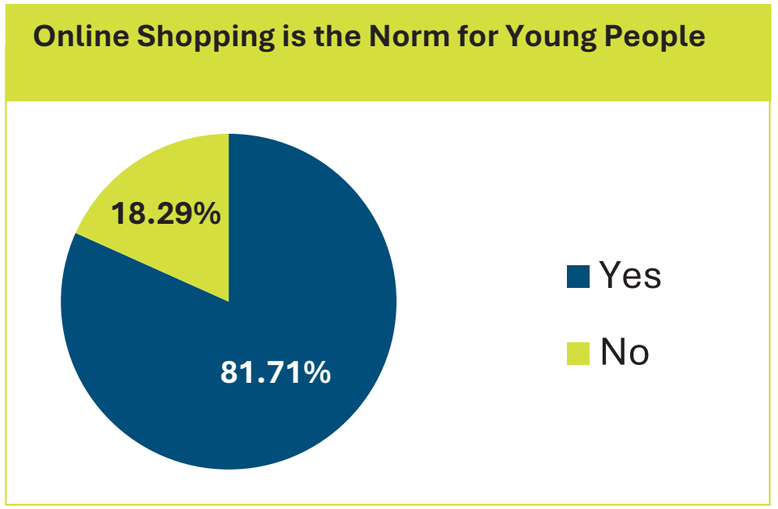
Q: How confident are you using digital financial tools and/or mobile downloaded apps to manage your money? Sample Size = 1,052

Over half of the 1,052 respondents to this question cited that they are 'somewhat confident' using digital tools. This was followed by 28% citing that they are 'very confident'. 10% of participants stated that they do not use online tools or apps. Only 9% stated that they are 'not confident' and 1% that they are 'extremely not confident.' These results demonstrate that most young people are confident in navigating digital financial tools, though most fall into the 'somewhat confident' category rather than fully self-assured. This points to an opportunity for further financial literacy education, ensuring that young people can maximise the potential of digital platforms for safe and effective money management.

Shopping Online

Similar to 2022 and 2023, the next series of questions asked students whether or not they shop online, and if they do, how they ensure they are shopping safely. Research published by An Post found that 95% of all Irish adults had shopped online in 2023. Furthermore, it was found that on average 33% of 16-24 year olds shop online weekly.[17] Young people too are shopping online frequently according to the findings of this research. In Figure 14 below, we outline the number of students surveyed who are shopping online.

Figure 14: Online Shopping



Q: Do you shop online?
Sample Size = 1,039

A large majority (81.71%, 849 respondents) reported that they shop online, while only 18.29% (190 respondents) stated that they do not. These findings are nearly identical to the findings of the Money Matters Surveys 2022 and 2023. This high participation rate demonstrates the central role of online commerce in the financial lives of young people and underscores the importance of developing strong digital literacy skills to navigate potential risks.

In a follow-on question, we asked students to write-in a response to 'how do you know you are on a website that is safe to use?' The write-in responses revealed a number of key steps utilised by young people to protect themselves online and to make sure they are shopping on safe and trusted websites. Similar to the results of the Money Matters Survey 2022 and 2023, the scope and range of the responses were very encouraging.

17 An Post – eCommerce Index Research.

Table B: Most Common Responses for Safety Check in Online Shopping

Write-in responses: 'How do you know a website is safe to use?'
• Look for the padlock • Check reviews • Use a known or trusted website • Use 'Trust Pilot'

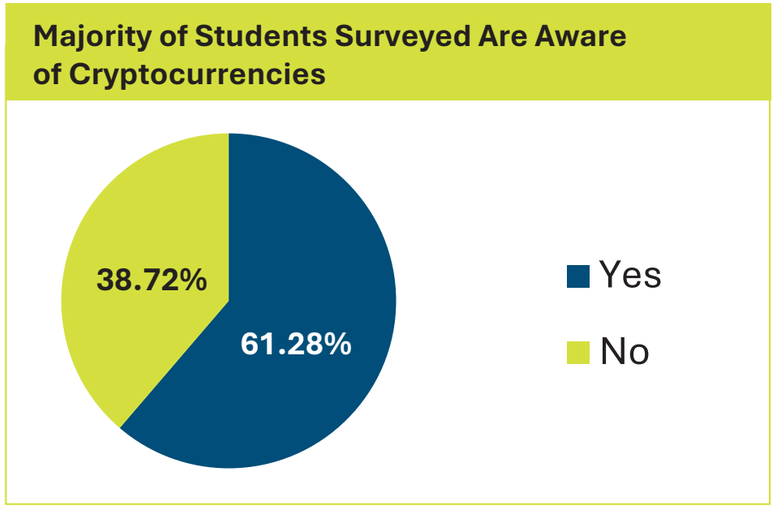
When asked how they ensure that a website is safe to use, several clear themes emerged. The most common strategy was reliance on the padlock symbol or 'https://' in the web address, mentioned hundreds of times in different forms. While this demonstrates a strong awareness of basic digital safety indicators, it also points to overreliance on a single visual cue, which can be misleading given that fraudulent websites may also display padlock symbols. The second most cited approach was checking customer reviews or peer recommendations, including consulting forums such as Reddit or seeking reassurance from family members. These responses highlight the importance of social discourse in young people's financial decision-making. A significant proportion of respondents reported using only well-known and trusted platforms (such as Amazon, Shein, Nike, or TikTok Shop) as a way of minimising risk. A smaller group of students described more advanced practices, such as, researching websites; checking for scam reports; or verifying policies and terms. A minority also referenced protective systems like PayPal, VPNs, or antivirus protection, showing an awareness of layered online security measures. Nevertheless, a notable subset of respondents admitted to uncertainty, with some stating they 'don't know' how to check for safety or that they rely on guesswork and familiarity. In light of the ever-increasing number of online scams, it is highly desirable that on-going developments in financial literacy within this area are sought, as children and young people are exposed to the online world.

Cryptocurrencies

Awareness and Engagement with Cryptocurrencies

In this latest Money Matters Survey, a new question was added to assess respondents' awareness and engagement with cryptocurrencies. Participants were asked to answer 'Yes' or 'No' to indicate their awareness of cryptocurrencies. The inclusion of this question followed from findings in the 2022 and 2023 surveys, where there was an interest amongst many in this area. Illustrated in Figure 15 below, is that while the majority of students (61.28%) indicated at least some awareness of cryptocurrencies, potentially suggesting broad exposure through social media and online content, a significant portion reported no familiarity (38.72%). These results reflect an evolving financial landscape where digital money is now present within the financial awareness of many students. MABS continues to view this as an important topic for balanced and contemporary financial education, ensuring students understand both the opportunities and the risks associated with emerging financial technologies.

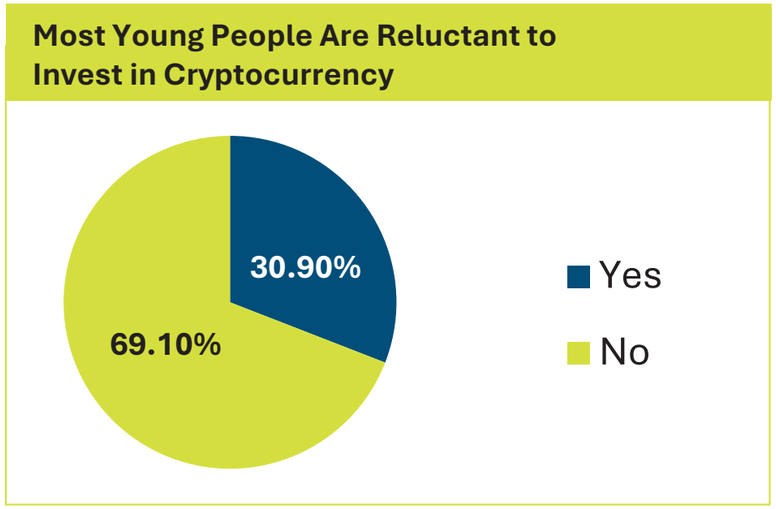
Figure 15: Awareness of Cryptocurrencies



Q: Do you know about cryptocurrencies?
Sample Size = 966

Having ascertained participants awareness of cryptocurrencies, the Money Matters Survey proceeded to ask respondents whether they would consider investing in them in the future. This yes/no question was designed to capture young people's attitudes toward emerging forms of digital investment and their perceived level of trust in such financial products. The inclusion of this question reflects the contemporary interest in the role of digital assets in modern finance and their appeal among younger audiences. Despite the relatively high awareness identified, willingness to actively engage with cryptocurrencies is somewhat limited. As illustrated in Figure 16 below, 30.9% (292 respondents) stated they would consider investing in cryptocurrencies, while a clear majority of 69.1% (653 respondents) reported that they would not. This indicates a significant level of caution or scepticism among young people who may be aware of the risks associated with crypto markets, including volatility, scams, and lack of regulation. MABS views this insight as particularly valuable in supporting continued education around safe, informed decision-making in relation to investment and digital financial products.

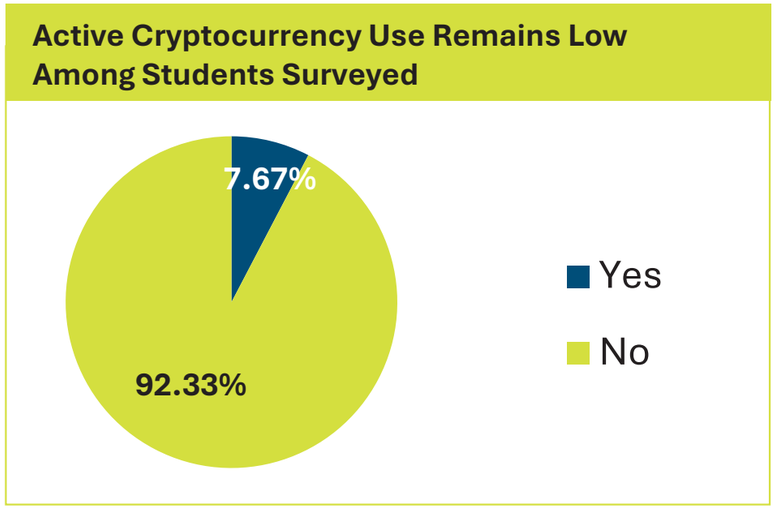
Figure 16: Willingness to Invest in Cryptocurrencies



Q: Would you ever consider investing in cryptocurrencies?
Sample Size = 945

A further question in this version of the Money Matters Survey asked respondents whether they currently own a cryptocurrency wallet. This yes/no question was designed to move beyond general awareness and interest in cryptocurrencies to capture the extent of actual engagement among young people. A cryptocurrency wallet is an application or platform that allows users to hold, send, and receive digital currencies such as Bitcoin or Ethereum. The findings presented in Figure 17 below reveal that actual participation in the crypto economy is minimal amongst this cohort. 7.67% (73 respondents) reported holding a digital cryptocurrency wallet, while the overwhelming majority (92.33% or 879 respondents) stated that they do not. This demonstrates that while awareness is widespread, active involvement among secondary-level students in Ireland is still confined to a small minority. MABS considers this an encouraging indicator that, while digital finance continues to evolve rapidly, most young people are approaching these emerging financial tools with caution. Financial education efforts should continue to focus on helping young people understand both the technical and risk-related aspects of cryptocurrency ownership and digital security.

Figure 17: Ownership of a Cryptocurrency Wallet



Q: Do you have a digital crypto wallet?
Sample Size = 952

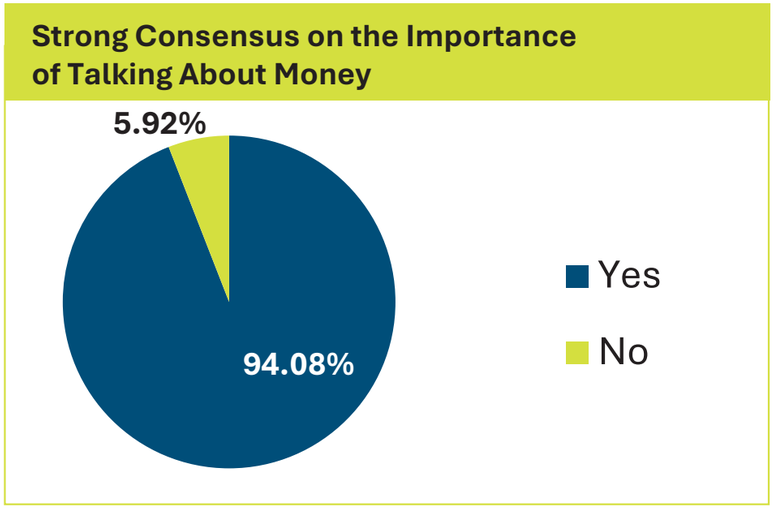
Taken together, the data presented above suggests that young people are digitally literate so as to be familiar with cryptocurrencies, but their behaviours show restraint and prudence. This cautious stance can be seen as a positive marker of financial decision-making maturity, as students appear to recognise the difference between awareness of high-risk financial instruments and the appropriateness of engaging with them at their current stage of financial development.

Attitudes About Money and Asking for Help

The following series of questions asked in the 2025 Money Matters Survey ascertained:

- Whether or not students feel it is important to talk about money.
- If students have questions or concerns about money, whether they feel comfortable asking for help.

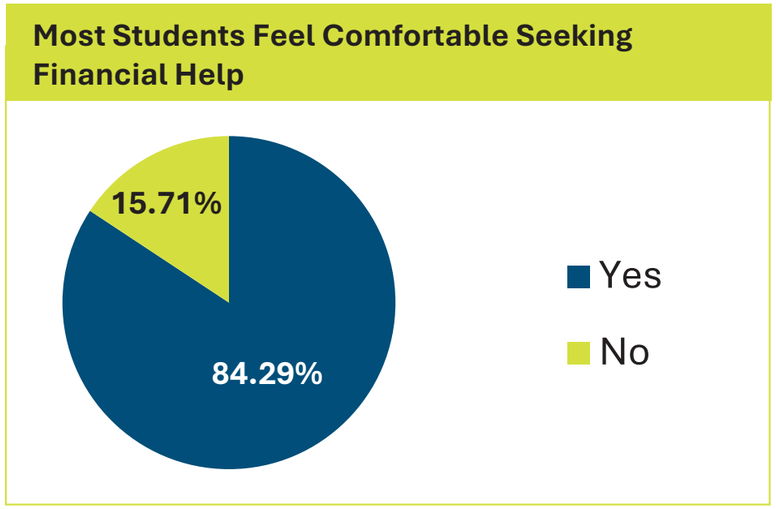
Figure 18: Importance of Talking About Money



Q: Do you think it is important to talk about money?
Sample Size = 1,030

As per Figure 18 above, the vast majority of students who took the survey felt it was important to talk about money. An overwhelming 94.08% (969 respondents) believe that it is important to talk about money, compared to just 5.92% (61 respondents) who do not. This result is very similar to the 2022 and 2023 surveys where 96% of participants also responded 'Yes' to this question. Given this near-unanimous consensus, it is apparent that open conversations about financial matters are a vital component of learning, understanding, and managing money effectively. This is an encouraging finding and one that hopefully represents a social shift from the persistent stigma and shame associated in certain cases with discussing money matters, a matter further explored in question 18.

Figure 19: Confidence in Asking for Help



Q: If you have questions or concerns about money, do you feel comfortable asking for help?
Sample Size = 1,012

Illustrated in Figure 19 above, is that the openness in speaking about money extends to seeking support. When asked whether they feel comfortable asking for help with money-related questions or concerns, 84.29% (853 respondents) responded affirmatively, while 15.71% (159 respondents) said they do not. Despite the willingness to seek help identified by many, there is a critical minority who do not feel comfortable, an area that warrants targeted attention in financial education and presents an opportunity for a deeper exploration of the potential rationales in the next iteration of this survey.

Overall, the data portrays a generation that not only values the importance of financial conversations but is also largely comfortable engaging in them. This reflects a growing cultural acceptance of money as an open topic, marking a shift away from traditional taboos. However, ensuring that the minority who remain hesitant are supported to develop confidence and trust in financial dialogue remains an important challenge for future financial literacy initiatives.

Money Interests and Learning Outcomes

In the 2023 Money Matters Survey, we asked participants to write-in one area of money management that they are interested in learning about in the future. The topics listed varied significantly. We repeated this question in the 2025 survey, and Table C below highlights the most commonly referenced topics among students' responses.

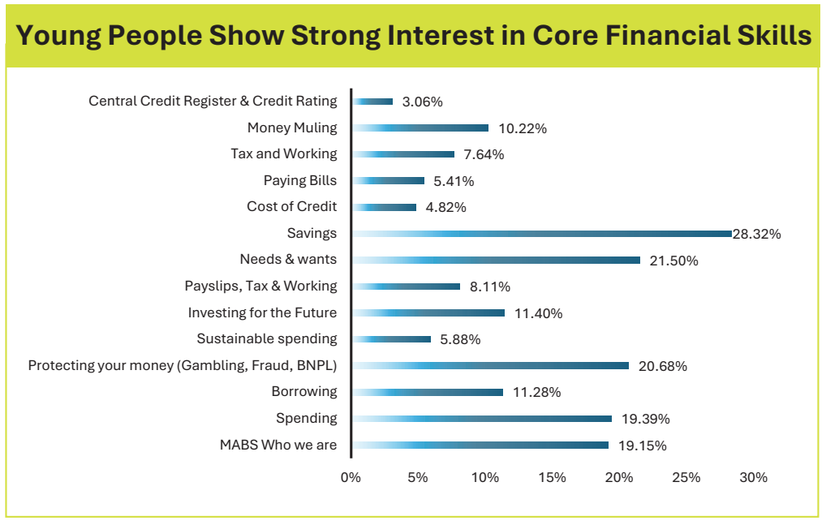
Table C: Most Common Areas of Interest for Future Learning

What is one area related to money and money management that you would like to learn more about in the future?	
• Investing	• Payslips
• Saving	• Economy
• Budgeting	• Banks
• Tax	• Scams
• Cryptocurrency	• Gambling
• Loans	• Insurance
• Nothing	

Compared to the 2023 Money Matters Survey, the most common responses in 2025 related to 'investing', 'saving', 'budgeting', 'tax'. These open responses highlight a mature understanding among young people of the complexities of personal finance. While a small minority stated how they already feel informed or had no interest in further learning, the overwhelming majority identified concrete areas where they want more knowledge, demonstrating the pivotal nature of Global Money Week on an ongoing basis.

The final question ascertained the most interesting thing learned by students during Global Money Week 2025. For this question, we offered students a multiple-choice selection of topics covered during GMW presentations/workshops which had been delivered by a MABS staff member prior to issuing the survey. It is important to note that while a full lesson plan was provided for each MABS service to deliver in their respective school, the MABS staff member who was delivering the GMW workshop was responsible for determining what lessons to deliver, taking into consideration the available class time and age appropriateness of the subject matter. Furthermore, some services introduced their own topics/activities such as information on credit rating or a personality test determining what type of spender students might be.

Figure 20: Most Interesting Learning Outcome from Global Money Week 2025



Q: What was the one most interesting thing you learned during GMW 2025?
Sample size = 851

Please note that not every student/survey participant received information on all topics listed in Figure 20 above. However, it is important to highlight the significant number of students that found 'saving' and 'needs and wants' (which are fundamental financial education topics and learning outcomes) the most interesting aspect of Global Money Week 2025. A core component of the work of MABS to support Global Money Week and all our educational initiatives is to promote awareness of MABS and the MABS service. We are the primary government-sponsored intervention for supporting households dealing with debt and facing financial difficulty. It is, in our view, encouraging that close to 20% of the survey participants found the 'MABS: who we are' lesson as one of the most interesting topics of Global Money Week. Overall, students responded most strongly to areas that directly affect their personal financial decision-making, particularly savings, spending priorities, and protection against financial risks. There is also clear, though slightly lower, interest in investment and understanding credit mechanisms. In consideration of the areas of interest for future learnings alongside the matters considered within the Global Money Week activities it is apparent that there is a high degree of overlap suggesting that the initiative remains topical and applicable with this age cohort of younger adults.

Conclusion

In light of the findings from the Money Matters 2025 Survey, it is apparent that young people in Ireland continue to demonstrate strong financial curiosity, digital engagement, and a growing sense of responsibility towards their personal finances. However, the results also highlight important gaps that require sustained attention from policymakers, educators, and researchers. It is desirable that efforts are made to develop a dedicated national framework for youth financial literacy, one that is practical, culturally relevant, and responsive to young people's lived experiences in an increasingly digital financial landscape.

With the desire to increasingly incorporate financial education into schools (as discussed in the introduction to this report), the results of this survey illustrate the necessity for targeted education on ATM use, payslips, taxation, employment rights, and the transition toward financial independence, particularly given the high proportion of students engaged in part-time or seasonal work. In order to continue to put forward such suggestions, this research project must maintain an ongoing and adaptive approach, expanding the scope of the study to enhance generalisability and to ensure that emerging financial behaviours are captured over time. Fulfilling this aim will not only build a stronger evidence base but also support the design of policies and educational initiatives that genuinely meet the evolving needs of Ireland's young people.

As this work continues to evolve and generate novel insights, it is vital to once again recognise and thank all those who made this research possible – from the individual student participants, their teachers and the staff of the MABS Regional Companies who supported Global Money Week 2025. The findings of Money Matters 2025 have yielded a number of important topics for discussion, and we will be collating these in order to inform future surveys and research activities in this area. In Table E below, we have provided a summary of the main results from the 2025 Money Matters Survey, as compared with the findings from 2023.

Table D: Main Results of Money Matters 2025

Topic	Main findings of the 2025 survey compared to 2023 and 2022
Learning about money	The number of those who learn about money from their parents and family decreased from 85% in 2022 to 70% in 2023. The 2025 survey identified a marginal increase with 73.11% identifying parents and family members as the most influential in their financial learning. In comparison to 2023 there has been an increase in those utilising social media as their predominant source of financial education (33.99%). TikTok continues to dominate this field with 72.03% suggesting that it was the most likely social media forum to be utilised for financial learning. This is an increase from 64% of respondents in 2023.
Types of personal bank accounts	A notable observation from this version of the Money Matters Survey is that a Credit Union Account was the most common (34.2%) amongst those respondents who have a traditional bank account. Furthermore, while AIB had previously been the most common traditional bank account according to the 2023 survey, it has since fallen into third place behind a Credit Union and Bank of Ireland. Comparable with 2023, Revolut or Revolut Junior continues to dominate digital bank accounts. This popularity has further increased with it growing from 84% in 2023 to 92.81% in 2025.
Saving behaviours	Somewhat comparable/consistent with both 2022 and 2023, nearly three-quarters of respondents (71.7%) engage in consistent or occasional saving as illustrated in 2025.
Engagement in part-time or seasonal work	A new question added to this year's survey ascertained the number of those who work in addition to completing their schoolwork. Commendably, 88% of respondents specified that they work either part-time or during their summer holidays, gaining practical financial experience.
Keeping track of money and confidence using digital tools	An additional question added to this year's survey directly ascertained the capacity of respondents to use an ATM. Though the majority were able to do so, a significant proportion (26.01%) claimed they could not. The widespread ability to use an ATM shows that youth financial engagement spans both digital and physical channels, positioning them as hybrid financial users who navigate between traditional and non-traditional services. In comparison to 2023, there has been a marginal decrease in the number of respondents who track their money on their phones with it falling from over 60% in 2023 to approximately 52% in 2025. Despite this reduction, a digital means continues to be the preferred method of money tracking albeit that 29.43% manage their money in tangible form via wallet, purse, piggy bank, jar. In assessing the levels of confidence in using digital financial tools to manage money, an almost identical set of results was obtained to both 2022 and 2023 versions of the survey.
Shopping online	82% of students are shopping online, this is a 1% decrease when compared with the findings from Money Matters 2023. As a protective mechanism, respondents continue to employ an array of precautionary steps when shopping online.
Cryptocurrency	A number of questions were added to this version of the Money Matters Survey to assess the awareness and utility of cryptocurrencies. Despite 61% of respondents being aware of cryptocurrencies, in general they are cautious of their utility with 69% specifying how they would not consider investing in them and 8% currently in ownership of a crypto wallet.
Talking about money and asking for help	In comparison to 2023, there is a marginal decrease from 96% to 94% in the number of those who feel it is important to talk about money, with the confidence in asking for help falling from 90% to 84% in 2025.
Areas of interest for future learning	Despite some interest in novel areas such as cryptocurrencies and financial scams, the overwhelming amount of interest for future learning is in what might be considered to be traditional areas such as how to invest, how to save, how to budget, and how to pay/manage taxes.

Appendix A: Money Matters Survey 2025

Money Management Workshop from the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)

Evaluation Form and Survey 2025

This survey is anonymous. Please Mark an 'X' in applicable boxes

Age Range (Mark 'X' where applicable)

☐ Under 12 ☐ 12-14 ☐ 15-17

Gender (Mark 'X' where applicable)

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Non Binary ☐ Prefer not to say

School Year (Mark 'X' where applicable)

☐ Primary School Student ☐ 1st Year ☐ 2nd Year
☐ Junior Cert ☐ Transition Year ☐ 5th Year
☐ Leaving Cert ☐ LCA ☐ Non-School Student

1. **Where do you mainly learn about money? (Mark 'X' on all that apply)**

☐ School ☐ Parents/Family members ☐ Friends
☐ TV ☐ Social Media ☐ Generative AI (for example, ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini)
☐ Online (e.g. YouTube)

2. **If you ticked Social Media, from what site do you mainly learn about money? (Mark 'X' on one box only)**

☐ TikTok ☐ Snapchat ☐ Facebook ☐ Twitter ☐ Instagram

3. **Do you have a traditional bank account with a bank, Credit Union, or An Post?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. **If you have a traditional (non digital bank account) please an Mark 'X' against which one(s) you have.**

☐ Bank of Ireland ☐ AIB ☐ Permanent TSB ☐ EBS
☐ My CU (Credit Union account ☐ An Post Current account ☐ Non-Irish main stream bank

5. Can you use an ATM?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Do you have a digital only bank account?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. If you have a digital only bank account, please Mark 'X' against which one(s) you have

☐ Revolut or Revolut Junior ☐ N26 ☐ Bunq ☐ Moneyjar

Other (BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

8. Do you work as well as attend school?

☐ No ☐ Yes– I have a part-time weekend job ☐ Yes – I work during school summer holidays

9. How do you keep track of your money? (Please Mark 'X' against the one you use most often)

☐ On a computer/laptop/tablet came with my phone ☐ On a phone app that ☐ On a digital/phone app that I downloaded

☐ Going to the bank/credit union ☐ Using an ATM ☐ Wallet, Purse, Piggy Bank, Jar

☐ My parents/ family help me Other (BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

10. When you get money, how often do you put your money aside into savings?

☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Once in a while ☐ Never

11. How confident are you using digital financial tools and/or mobile downloaded apps to manage your money?

☐ Very Confident ☐ Somewhat Confident ☐ Not confident

☐ Extremely not confident ☐ I don't use online tools or apps

12. Do you shop online?

☐ Yes ☐ No

13. If yes, how do you make sure you are on a website that is safe to use? (Please answer with BLOCK CAPITALS)

14. Do you know about cryptocurrencies?

☐ Yes ☐ No

15. Would you ever consider investing in cryptocurrencies?

☐ Yes ☐ No

16. Do you have a digital crypto wallet?

☐ Yes ☐ No

17. Do you think it is important to talk about money?

☐ Yes ☐ No

18. If you have questions or concerns about money, do you feel comfortable asking for help?

☐ Yes ☐ No

19. What is the one area related to money and money management that you would like to learn more about in the future? (Please answer with BLOCK CAPITALS)

20. What was the one most interesting thing you learned during Global Money Week 2025? (Mark 'X' against one answer (Note some topics may not have been covered today)

☐ MABS: who we are

☐ Spending

☐ Borrowing

☐ Protecting your money (Gambling, Fraud, BNPL)

☐ Sustainable spending

☐ Investing for the future

☐ Payslips, Tax & Working

☐ Needs & wants

☐ Saving

☐ Cost of credit

☐ Paying bills

☐ Tax and working

☐ Money muling

☐ Central credit register & credit rating

Thank you for completing this survey

Appendix B: Photos and Social Media from Global Money Week 2025

Breifne College, Co. Cavan

Castleblayney College, Co. Monaghan

St Davids, Co. Dublin

St. Patricks, Co. Kerry

Authors

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