MOTHERS FAILING TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FINANCIALLY

Financial protection may not be top of the list when it comes to Mother's Day gifts this year, but research from Scottish Widows reveals that 60% of women in the UK with dependent children have no life cover, leaving their families in a precarious situation if the worst were to happen.

The research also shows that only 13% of mums have a critical illness policy, leaving many more at risk of financial hardship if they were to become seriously ill.

Three in ten (31%) mums admit their household would be placed at financial risk if they lost their income due to unforeseen circumstances. One in four (25%) claim they could only pay their mortgage for a maximum of three months, while two fifths (39%) say they would have to use their savings to pay for such adverse circumstances.

The research also suggests that many mothers are underestimating the value of their role within the household. Almost a quarter (24%) say that they've not taken out life insurance because it's not a financial priority or they don't think they need it. And 7% of mums without critical illness cover say they'd rather take the risk of not having it than take out a policy.

However, on top of any day jobs, mums spend almost 23 hours a week on childcare and chores such as school runs and housework* – tasks which they believe their families could not afford to pay for should the worst happen to them. Three fifths (61%) of women with dependent children also say their household would struggle to complete everyday responsibilities or pay household bills if they were to fall ill or pass away.

Lack of planning is leaving many families in a vulnerable position. When asked how they'd cope should they or their partner not be able to work for six months, three in ten (29%) mothers say they'd rely only on state benefits. And more than half (57%) don't have the protection of a will or guardianship arrangement in place for their families.

With a new Bereavement Support Payment system now in place, which may result in a significant reduction in the period over which support will be available, it's more important than ever for

mothers to review their financial protection needs. This is especially the case for cohabitees, who still don't qualify for bereavement benefits.

Johnny Timpson, protection specialist at Scottish Widows, says: "Many mothers don't consider having insurance as a necessity, with almost a fifth saying they don't rate having critical illness cover as a financial priority. But there's also the value of a mother's contribution to the home, outside of employment. It's just as important for full-time mums to be insured and just because someone doesn't earn a salary doesn't mean their contribution in the home shouldn't be protected as it could be very costly to replace.

"The value of protection is to provide long-term peace of mind about having financial security in place for your dependents. And changes to bereavement benefits mean that it's more important than ever for mothers to review their financial protection needs and seek advice to make sure their household is covered."

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For further information please contact:
Lorna Waddell, Scottish Widows, 07793 670 682
Lorna.waddell@lloydsbanking.com

* This number is calculated by combining women's self-reported time spent per week on taking children to school, preparing family meals, helping children with homework, housework, getting children ready for school, picking up children from school and watching children play sport.

Notes to editors:
- Scottish Widows' protection research is based on a survey carried out online by Opinium, who interviewed a total of 5,077 adults in the UK between 16th and 27th March 2017.
- Scottish Widows was founded in 1815 as Scotland's first mutual life office and is one of the most recognised brands in the life, pensions and investment industry in the UK
- Scottish Widows supports and is participating in the Cii Insuring Women's Futures Programme, for detail see www.insuringwomensfutures.co.uk