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Meet the Full Nesters

Providing financial support for adult offspring – what are the implications?

Parents with adult children living under their roof are spending £1,200[1] more than their Empty Nester counterparts each year on everyday household expenditure, bringing the total annual cost of 'Full Nest Syndrome' in the UK to £3.2 billion[2].

Meet the Full Nesters, a report from the Scottish Widows think tank Centre for the Modern Family, has delved into the financial, practical and emotional strain placed on parents who are providing room and board for their adult offspring, and explores the impact this is having on the modern family dynamic.

UNABLE TO FLY THE NEST

The figures show that more than a quarter of adults aged between 20-34 are still living at home[3], and a fifth (19%) of students are opting to stay at home while studying[4]. The 'Boomerang Kid' phenomenon is increasingly morphing into a 'Never Fledged Generation' – those for whom the high cost of living and accommodation means they are unable to fly the nest even for a short time.

GREATER FINANCIAL SACRIFICES

To cope with the additional cost of having their adult children living at home for longer, the report finds that Full Nesters are making greater financial sacrifices than Empty Nesters across the

board, with some putting their own financial future at risk. One in three (31%) have cut spending on vital items, compared to 21% of empty nesters, while 16% have needed to take out a loan, spent on credit cards or gone overdrawn, against 7% of empty nesters. A third (30%) of Full Nesters report that they are contributing less to their savings, while more than one in four (28%) are spending their savings to meet the cost of everyday living.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

In contrast to Empty Nesters, Full Nesters are prioritising their family in the here and now, often at the expense of their future plans. Almost half (44%) say their current focus is providing for their family, compared to 23% of Empty Nesters, while a third of Full Nesters (34%) are focused on paying off debt, compared to 17% of Empty Nesters. Moreover, many Full Nesters are conscious that this could be compromising plans for later life, with a quarter (24%) saying they wish they were able to focus more on preparing for the future.



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ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT

On top of covering the cost of having adult children under their roof, the report finds many Full Nesters are providing additional financial support to their offspring. Two thirds (62%) of Full Nesters say they are financially supporting their children, compared to just 37% of Empty Nesters, with 32% of Full Nesters not expecting to get the money back. Despite this, the majority (63%) are happy to lend money to help their family members out.

RETIREMENT PLANS ON HOLD

The research highlights the very real pressures being felt by Full Nesters as a result of the rapid emergence of the 'Never Fledged Generation'. With many parents raiding their savings or putting their retirement plans on hold to cover the cost of their adult children still living under their roof, we need to ask ourselves what the longer-term implications of these trends are and what this means for the financial well-being of these parents.

TIME TO REVIEW YOUR CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION?

If you would like to review your current financial situation, please contact us – we look forward to hearing from you.

Source data:

[1] ONS UK Labour Force Survey 2013

[2] ONS data shows that there are 2.7 million households in the UK with adult children living at home. Centre for the Modern Family data shows that the average monthly household spend reported by Full Nesters is £460, compared to £360 for Empty Nesters, which equates to an additional annual spend of £1,200. Multiplied by the ONS figure of 2.7 million full nests gives an overall figure of £3.3 billion

[3] ONS Young Adults Living with Parents 2013

[4] Higher Education Statistics Authority <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/stats>
The research was completed by YouGov and the findings are based on 2,082 online interviews with a nationally representative sample of adults aged 18 and over living in the UK. The interviews were conducted between 28 April and 1 May 2014.

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