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**NEARLY SIX OUT OF 10 'STRUGGLE TO PAY BILLS'
Average adult believes they need a 17% income rise to comfortably meet household bills, MetLife UK Financial Security Index shows**

Nearly six out of 10 adults are struggling to meet bills comfortably as the recession tightens the screws on household finances, new research* from MetLife Europe Limited (MetLife) shows.

The study reveals the average person believes they need a 17 per cent increase in household income in order to be able to comfortably handle regular bills with one in 12 believing they need a rise in income of 50 per cent or more.

Just 37 per cent of adults say they do not need to increase their income in order to comfortably pay household bills while 58 per cent say they need substantial income increases.

The findings, part of MetLife's UK Financial Security Index, shows high levels of nervousness among savers who are increasingly looking for guarantees when they invest money. Nearly three out of four adults say a guarantee that their original investment would be protected would make them feel more secure.

Dominic Grinstead, Strategic Development and Marketing Director of MetLife's UK Retirement & Savings business, says: "The economic shocks of the past six months have had a profound effect across the country with people increasingly looking for safety.

“The need for safety is illustrated by the desire for average increases in income of as much as 17 per cent. In the current climate nobody is going to get anything like that as a pay rise unfortunately but it is interesting as a gauge of how far away from safety some people feel.

“The safety first impulse in the face of collapsing banks and volatile stock markets is increasing interest in guarantees on investment products as well.”

The retirement savings group’s UK Financial Security Index takes the temperature of UK financial security across a range of 12 measures of how secure or insecure people feel.

MetLife’s range of retirement and long-term savings products with innovative guarantee features includes its award-winning Retirement Portfolio, the first personal pension to offer both capital and income guarantees.

The product provides unique guarantees which protect the clients fund value against markets falling, locks-in gains every three years when markets rise and guarantees income for life. For more information advisers should go to www.metlife.co.uk/rp.

It pioneers unit-linked guarantees by including an optional capital guarantee for those saving for retirement, deferred income guarantee for clients looking to delay taking an income, and an income guarantee for those seeking an immediate income. All the guarantees offer 100 per cent performance lock-ins every three years.

It is fully flexible for retirement benefits offering the ability to consolidate, take full drawdown, partial drawdown and phased drawdown. Clients can choose lump sum death benefits if required and auto-fund rebalancing on selected funds.

The minimum initial investment is £50,000 and clients have access to a range of MetLife Best of Breed and Index Funds, Managed and Index Portfolios chosen with the assistance of leading independent investment research company, Morningstar Associates Europe Limited.

MetLife is an affiliate of US-based MetLife, Inc. a leading global insurance and financial services organisation which counts the U.S.'s largest life insurer among its subsidiaries. The organisation is renowned for its stability, financial strength and security, and had over £358 billion of total assets at 31st December 2008.

Notes to Editors

* Based on an independent online survey conducted by ICM Research among 2,007 UK adults aged 18-plus between February 20th and 22nd 2009

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