

Mortgage Finance Gazette AWARDS 2011

The nomination process for the 11th annual Mortgage Finance Gazette Awards is about to get under way. Readers are invited to put forward organisations and individuals, that deserve recognition for their hard work

It's time to start thinking about the Mortgage Finance Gazette Awards and send in your nominations. The past couple of years have been difficult for lenders but despite tough conditions there are some good stories out there, so why not share them with us and the mortgage lending industry.

The awards are a mix of recognising the achievements of people and lenders and accolades for best products from the best providers.

We are seeking those lenders and financial services companies that have some positive news to share. We want to find those organisations who deserve to be recognised for attributes such as innovation, community services, treating customers fairly, green credentials, best use of arrears management, best use of technology and best anti-fraud measure.

There are two individual awards - the Leadership/Ambassador Award is for a stalwart within the industry who is at the forefront of business; and the other is the Individual Achievement award for anyone within the sector who goes beyond the call of duty.

Some of the awards will be worked out using detailed statistics from finan-

How the awards work

The judging panel will include journalists from the national press, industry experts, and the editors of *What Mortgage* and *Mortgage Finance Gazette*. Statistics will be provided by Defaqto. The judges' decision is final. The December edition of *Mortgage Finance Gazette* will feature full coverage of the event and the winners.

The closing date for nominations is Friday 9 September 2010.

cial research company Defaqto, while others will be sourced from *MFG* readers who are invited to nominate potential worthy winners. A judging takes place where the winners and runners-up within the nominated categories are chosen by a panel of judges.

Some of the categories are divided into 'large lenders' and 'small to medium-sized lenders'. As a guide we are suggesting that larger lenders are classed as those with total assets or total mortgage balances outstanding of £5 billion plus. This means the large lenders are likely to be among the top 25 in size.

But you don't necessarily have to be a mortgage lender to enter some of the categories as we have opened them out to non-lenders. Non-lenders can be any company involved in the mortgage sector, so this could be mortgage intermediaries, law firms, IT companies, insurance companies and others. We encourage organisations to put themselves forward backed up with good reasons for your entry.

The awards are to be presented at an evening celebration in London at the beginning of November and all finalists will be invited to attend.

Innovator of the Year Award

There are three categories to this award for different elements of the industry - large lenders, small to medium-sized lenders and, new this year, non-lenders.

Innovation can relate to mortgage products, delivery channels, the use of technology to improve business efficiency and customer relationships, and ways of working with and managing people.

Last year's winners were HSBC for its 'Mortgage Matcher', a branch-based 'whole of market' mortgage service de-

signed to appeal to the large number of HSBC customers who have their mortgage with a different lender or who would benefit from a type of home loan that HSBC did not provide.

In the small to medium-sized lender category the winner was Bath Building Society for creating PAM - the Parent Assisted Mortgage. First-time buyers provide a 10 per cent deposit but use a collateral charge on their parent's home to reduce the risk of the loan. With PAM, parents stand as guarantor to put some of their own equity in as security, in the event of default or sale in possession causing a loss.

Community Services Award

This award recognises work in the voluntary sector, to which many financial services organisations are very committed. There are three awards in this category for large, and small to medium-sized lenders and this year we are also opening it up to non-lenders.

Although financial contributions and fundraising are important criteria, the judges will be interested in staff involvement in terms of secondments, fundraising and voluntary activities. Judging may not necessarily be based on one particular project - although a really worthwhile exercise would be taken into consideration - but on the sum of the parts and the role community service plays in the corporate identity of the organisation.

Last year's winners were Nationwide Building Society and Cumberland Building Society.

Nationwide set up the Nationwide



HSBC picked up three awards last year

Education Programme - a free online interactive financial educational resource aimed at young people from the ages of four to 16. The website is linked to the National Curriculum and has specific sections with hints and tips to help bring finance to life using interactive story books, games and activities. There are also guidance sections for parents and teachers. This Financial Capability programme has been accredited by the Personal Finance Education Group.

The Cumberland does so much for its local community particularly through the Cumberland Building Society Charitable Foundation. But the judges were impressed by the society's 'community branches' which provide a range of free services to the local community. These include a recycling point, designated window space to promote local businesses, a free fax service, a

How to nominate

If you would like to nominate someone or an organisation for the MFG Awards - and you can nominate your own organisation - here is what to do:

- Send in your name, organisation, postal address, phone number and email address.
- State the award you are nominating for.
- Give the reasons for the nomination. We want to make the nomination process simple, so there is no need for a lengthy explanation, although any background documentation is always helpful. We suggest keeping your reasons quite short, within a page of A4 will suffice.

Getting your nominations to us

Email your nomination to the publisher Dan Miller at daniel.miller@metropolis.co.uk.

OR Post your nomination to Dan Miller, Publisher, Mortgage Finance Gazette, Metropolis Business Media, 6th Floor, Davis House, 2 Robert Street, Croydon CR0 1QQ.

The closing date for nominations is Friday 9 September 2010.

box office selling tickets for local events and an appeal collection point. Larger branches also offer floor space to mount exhibitions, sell local produce and promote other items of local interest. Space above one branch has been converted to provide a meeting room for community groups to use free of charge.

Excellence in TCF Award

Treating Customers Fairly is a major initiative of the Financial Services Authority and an important part of being a financial services provider. There are three categories - large mortgage lenders, small to medium mortgage lenders and non-lenders.

It is an FSA requirement that all financial services organisations have appropriate management information or measures in place to test whether they are treating their customers fairly. For this nomination just explain how you have been living and breathing TCF. Do you have a TCF policy in place which is fully understood by your staff?

The lender winners last year were Coventry Building Society and Darlington Building Society and the first non-lender winner in the MFG Awards was All Types of Mortgages (AToM).

Both Coventry and Darlington put the fair treatment of customers at the centre of everything they do with TCF measures based on the FSA's six consumer outcomes.

Mortgage packager AToM was a winner for maintaining good customer service to its broker clients during a difficult year. Nominations stated that AToM looks after its brokers and their clients, the company cares, and is always helpful and professional.

Best Debt and Arrears Management Strategy Award

These are tough times for those borrowers who are feeling the pinch in the credit crunch era. Arrears and repossessions are, needless to say, a problem but many lenders are doing their very best to keep borrowers with a roof over their heads. If you have a good strategy that's working and helping people, share your success with us.

Leeds Building Society collected the award last year for putting in place a Collections Transformation Programme. This brings together a range of activities to enable staff to work more effectively with customers. It includes staff training, a free home visit service for customers, a 'hot key' transfer for customers to access independent free debt advice

MFG Awards 2011 - AT A GLANCE

Mortgage lenders and product providers - call for nominations

The following awards are for readers to nominate organisations or an individual.

Innovator - large lenders
 Innovator - small to medium sized lenders
 Innovator - non-lenders

Community Services - large lenders
 Community Services - small to medium sized lenders
 Community Services - non-lenders

Excellence in Treating Customers Fairly - large lenders
 Excellence in Treating Customers Fairly - small to medium sized lenders

Excellence in Treating Customers Fairly - non-lenders

Best Debt and Arrears Management Strategy - mortgage lenders

Ecological/Green - mortgage lenders

Best Use of Technology - lender and/or supplier

Best Anti-Fraud Measure - lender and/or supplier

Individual Achievement- an individual within the mortgage lending industry

Leadership/Ambassador- an individual within the mortgage lending industry

Product provider awards

The product provider awards do not require nominations, they will be chosen from statistics compiled by Defaqto.

Best Overall Lender
 Best National Building Society
 Best National Bank
 Best Regional Building Society
 Best Local Building Society
 Best Lifetime Mortgage Provider
 Best Buy-to-Let Mortgage Provider
 Best Adviser-Only Lender
 Best Online Lender
 Best Insurance Provider

agencies, and investing in technology including developing a possessions database and loss recovery system.

Ecological/Green Award - mortgage lenders

This award can be for anything to do with the environment from green mortgage products to organisations improving their carbon footprints, recycling schemes, climate change initiatives. The judges will be looking for changes that organisations have made to boost their green credentials and what impact that has had on the environment.

The Ecology Building Society was last year's winner. It provides mortgages only for ecological properties and offers a mortgage range called "C Change" offering discounts off the society's SVR to reward homeowners when either buying or renovating properties in an energy efficient manner.

Best Use of Technology - lender and/or supplier

This award is open to both lenders and suppliers, either individually or as a team. For example, it could be a joint nomination from a lender and a supplier who have worked well together. Alternatively, perhaps a supplier has been successful with a number of lenders because of its systems. What the judges will be looking for is evidence of a positive outcome through the use of technology. This might mean the best use of technology has resulted in business growth or customer service has excelled or processes have become easier. These are just examples as this award covers the whole spectrum of IT within mortgage finance.

The inaugural winner of this award was Phoebus Software for its mortgage servicing system. Phoebus was nominated by mortgage servicer CapQuest, which said the system is adaptable, fast and delivers CapQuest a competitive advantage through technology.

Best Anti-Fraud Measure - lender and/or supplier

Fraud is becoming more and more of a problem in today's world, especially since the recession hit and fraud becomes more visible. But financial organisations are trying to combat this growing menace and we want to hear about the best solutions to tackle fraud. This could be mortgage fraud or phishing or ID fraud or any other type of financial fraud where organisations have put in measures to reduce fraud or stamp it out. Again this could be a joint nomination between lender and supplier or separate entries.

This was another new category last year and the winner was Quest for Q-Guard - an intelligent software tool that provides an additional layer of security to the existing mortgage approval process. It helps detect and prevent incidents of risk or fraudulent activity.

Individual Achievement Award

This award is open to anyone, irrespective of where they are employed in the hierarchy, who has succeeded in their work or career in difficult circumstances or undertaken an individual challenge or challenges that are out of the ordinary. In the past it has been won by people who work tirelessly for their local community through

fund raising or giving of their time to helping others or have been brave in the face of adversity. There are individuals out there who truly do some amazing things, so why not nominate a colleague who has gone beyond the call of duty.

Last year's very worthy winner was Carol Kirby from Skipton Building Society. Carol devotes a good deal of her time to raising money for both local and national charities. During the year she ran two marathons (Dublin and London), even though she had never run before, and took part in the gruelling Trailtrekker challenge where teams of four people walk together covering 100km in under 30 hours. Carol lost six toenails in the process but the team raised over £2,000 for Oxfam.

Leadership/Ambassador Award

This is in recognition of diplomatic and spokesman skills which have reflected well on the industry generally, as well as on the recipient's own organisation. It also incorporates leadership qualities where the nominee can focus their organisation on its corporate goals and direct the management team and business effectively. Nominees for this category are likely to be quoted frequently by the media and seen addressing conferences and other events.

Sara-Ann Burgess was the winner last year for her tireless lobbying for change in the payment protection industry. Sara-Ann is managing director of online PPI provider, Burgesses and has been a vocal opponent of expensive policies, pressurised sales tactics and mis-selling, which ultimately damaged the reputation of PPI. ■