

Under embargo until 13th May 2019

Coventry Building Society launches Mental Health First Aiders scheme

Coventry Building Society has recruited 28 Mental Health First Aiders from amongst its staff to help support colleagues with mental health issues, as part of the Society's wellbeing programme. The MHFAs have attended a two –day course (run by Kaleidoscope Plus Group) to learn how to recognise the signs and symptoms of common mental health issues, provide help on a first aid basis and refer colleagues to support services.

Gemma Unwin, HR Adviser said “Mental health affects everyone and is as important as physical health. So as an employer, we want to ensure that our employees receive the best support possible. Many people find it difficult to talk about and to know where to get help, which is why we are proud to support Mental Health Awareness Week and to launch our Mental Health First Aiders' scheme.”

Nathan Sweet, MHFA said “I first heard about the Mental Health First Aiders scheme at another company, and I thought it was a brilliant idea. So I was really pleased when the Society said they wanted to take part in the scheme. I wanted to volunteer as a MHFA as I have had a number of periods of depression, on and off since university and I know how isolating mental illness can be. There is a lot of stigma, particularly for men, which is a real barrier to getting help. So I'm really keen to talk about mental health issues and help raise awareness.”

Gemma continues, “During Mental Health Awareness Week we have the theme of resilience, and will be launching a number of workshops for employees which will be run throughout the year. By talking about mental health and learning coping mechanisms and strategies, we hope to make it easier for our people to be mentally resilient and more able to cope with the ups and downs of life”.

Coventry Building Society is recruiting and has a number of vacancies, for details please visit www.coventrycareers.co.uk.

For more information or additional comment please contact: the press office on **0800 121 6868** or email **media@thecoventry.co.uk**

Coventry Building Society. Principal Office: Economic House, PO Box 9, High Street, Coventry CV1 5QN. www.thecoventry.co.uk

Calls to 0800 numbers are free when made from the UK. You may be charged for calls to all other numbers, please contact your service provider for further details.

Notes to editors

MHFA Case Studies

Mike Grey – Customer Service Specialist
Age 36



I think MHFAs is a brilliant idea. We have trained first aiders for accidents and physical health problems so it's right that we also have people who are trained to look after our mental health, which is just as important. I've had a couple of severe episodes of depression and what helped me get better, was the support I received here at work. It really helped to talk about what was going on which is why I wanted to become a MHFA, and give someone else the support that had helped me.

Nathan Sweet – New Lending Support Manager

Age 30



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Coventry Building Society

Coventry Building Society is the UK's second largest building society, with assets exceeding £46 billion and over 1.9 million members. The Society has over 2,500 employees across our Branch Network and Head Office sites.

The Society is a Which? recommended savings provider and is ranked number one for savings by Fairer Finance, based on trust, customer happiness, complaint handling and transparency.

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