



Ben takes on new role to develop Darlington Intermediaries' specialist lending options

AN AWARD WINNING building society has invested in a new role to strengthen its position in the intermediary market and help secure long term growth.

Ben Blyth brings a wealth of specialist lending experience to Darlington Building Society (DBS) as the organisation's first Head of Intermediary Distribution.

Ben's move to the North East has already seen him contribute to a re branding project, with "Darlington Intermediaries" now having its own identity as part of DBS, with the promise: "We make complex cases simple."

With a reputation for innovation throughout his career, Ben's aim is to build on the Society's solid foundations by introducing more mortgage solutions with increased flexibility.

"These are exciting times for Darlington Building Society and I'm really proud to be part of such a creative and committed team of problem solvers and negotiators," says Ben.

Ben's rapid rise up the ranks in the financial sector began when he joined the counter services team of Cheshire Building Society in 2007.

"Working on the front line and engaging with customers is always a great foundation and I really value that experience," he says.

Ben continued to build on that experience when Cheshire Building

Society merged with Nationwide at the end of 2008, and he joined Market Harborough Building Society as a Mortgage Trainee six years later.

He quickly progressed to become a Senior Lending Specialist and then Direct Mortgage Lead, developing particular expertise around bridging finance, and is proud to be one of the first graduates of the Building Society Association's master's degree in leadership.

Ben made the move north to Darlington Building Society in May, attracted by its reputation for creativity and community engagement.

"The building society sector has a huge corporate responsibility agenda and there's no doubt that Darlington Building Society is a leader in that respect," he says.

The Society's commitment to share five per cent of its profits with the community by making donations to good causes is a cornerstone of the business and that philosophy appealed to Ben, who volunteers at a homeless shelter in London and has been a trustee for the local carnival in Market Harborough.

"Community engagement is embedded into the culture and that really appealed to me," he says.

His experience in specialist lending in the intermediary market will be used to help build relationships with mortgage brokers across England and Wales.

"We pick up business that High Street lenders can't cope with because we are smaller and more nimble," he explains. "We can move faster and be more flexible because we don't rely on systematic decisions. Instead, we have people with the time to listen and come up with bespoke solutions. Life is complicated and people don't always fit into neat boxes, so we have to find

ways to accommodate them wherever possible."

Ben's team of Business Development Managers include Chris Blewitt who was recently named Lending Rising Star – Product Provider – in the British Mortgage Awards based on votes from mortgage brokers.

Darlington Building Society was also named Best Specialist Mortgage Provider in the 2019 British Bank Awards and Ben is determined to secure back to back wins next year.

DBS currently offers solutions in eight specialist categories: Intergenerational Mortgages; Joint Borrower Sole Proprietor; Complex Situations; 4 Applicants = 4 Incomes; First Time Buyer, First Time Landlord; Foreign Currency; New Buildings Including Right To Buy; and Later Life Lending.

The number of options will grow under Ben's guidance in the coming months, led by "Adaptable Solutions" – a new combination of policy and products created to support those who may have had credit problems in the past.

DBS has also invested in a new easy to use online application portal for mortgage brokers as part of a refreshed Darlington Intermediaries website.

Darren Ditchburn, Director of Distribution at DBS, says: "Ben comes to us with invaluable experience in specialist lending and a great reputation for innovation, so it's exciting to have him as part of the team taking the Society forward."

In association with

Darlington
Building Society