**Fair Finance wins the Citi Micro-entrepreneurship Award for Outstanding Customer Service at the annual Responsible Finance Conference 2017**

Social business Fair Finance announced today that it had been named winner of Citi Micro-entrepreneurship Award for Outstanding Customer Service for 2017.

Fair Finance works to tackle financial exclusion in the UK, for businesses and individuals and last year supported nearly 13,000 people with access to finance and advice in managing their debts. Most of its customer have used high cost lenders or have been denied access to finance by the mainstream banking sector.

The Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards (CMA), delivered in partnership by Responsible Finance and the Citi Foundation, champion the thriving small businesses of Britain and home-grown entrepreneurs. To be eligible for the awards a business must have benefited from an affordable loan from responsible finance providers and have contributed to the local economic growth in the UK.

**Faisel Rahman**, CEO of Fair Finance said:

“Fair Finance’s success comes from treating our customers fairly, honestly and with respect. Treating every customer as an individual is us what customer service means. Doing this well means real investment from people in all parts of Fair Finance, from the front line to the Board, and this award reflects how seriously we take it. We are really proud to been recognised as the leader in the field in this area.”

“This year we received our full FCA Authorisation. I’m sure that one of the reasons we received it so quickly is that Treating Customers Fairly is as much a part of the culture of Finance as it is a regulatory requirements.

**Jennifer Tankard**, Chief Executive of Responsible Finance, said:

“It is impressive to see how Fair Finance is dedicated to delivering a quality, personalised service for its customers. The team at Fair Finance have shown real commitment to customer service.”

“The Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards celebrate the impact of responsible finance providers, championing the contribution of lenders such as Fair Finance to financial inclusion and economic growth. We are very proud of the industry that is creating hope and changing lives. Last year, responsible finance providers supported 9,600 small businesses, which created 10,700 jobs.”

“This is the 4th year of the Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards in the UK and the depth and range of entries is a testament to the continued evolution of the responsible finance sector – an industry that now serves more than 50,000 clients across the country.” said **Bob Annibale**, CMA Judge and Global Director of Citi Inclusive Finance and Community Development.

“Whether in Central London or in rural Cornwall, it is inspiring to see how individuals and organisations are putting their communities at the heart of their business models so that their enterprising clients can create jobs and support more inclusive economic opportunities and growth. Congratulations to Fair Finance and all of the winners.”

**Notes to editors:**

About Fair Finance

Fair Finance is a social business tackling financial exclusion in London and the UK. Launched in 2005 it offers loans to people to escape the clutches of high cost and payday lender, finance to build businesses and free money and debt advice to help people manage their finances.

It has helped around 35,000 people in London through its network of local branches and last year launched its services online.

Fair Finance is a member of Responsible Finance and a leading provider of microfinance in the UK.

www.fairfinance.org

About the Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards

Launched in 2005 and now spanning more than 30 countries, the Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards programme highlights the contributions of microentrepreneurs and microfinance institutions (MFIs) to their local economies. Through the programme, the Citi Foundation has invested more than $12 million in microfinance networks and MFIs to convene thousands of key stakeholders that influence sector-wide policy and regulation and encourage innovation around the world.

The programme was launched in the UK in 2013. The Citi Foundation is working in partnership with Responsible Finance to celebrate the achievements of the UK’s responsible finance sector.

In 2016/17 there were eight awards categories, open to members of Responsible Finance. The winners were selected by an independent judging panel:

Winners

1. Microentrepreneur Award for Sustainability: Clayworks 2. Microentrepreneur Award for Growth: ISO Space 3. Young Microentrepreneur: Brett’s Pets 4. Social Entrepreneur: The Gingerbread House 5. Effective Partnership Working: Co-operative & Community Finance 6. Outstanding Customer Service: Fair Finance 7. Outstanding Loan Officer: Sandra McLean 8. Responsible Finance Leader: Arthur Foreman

About the Citi Foundation

The Citi Foundation works to promote economic progress in communities around the world and focuses on initiatives that expand financial inclusion. We collaborate with best-in-class partners to create measurable economic improvements that strengthen low-income families and communities. Through a "More than Philanthropy" approach, Citi's business resources and human capital enhance our philanthropic investments and impact.

[www.citifoundation.com](http://www.citifoundation.com)

About Citi

Citi, the leading global bank, has approximately 200 million customer accounts and does business in more than 160 countries and jurisdictions. Citi provides consumers, corporations, governments and institutions with a broad range of financial products and services, including consumer banking and credit, corporate and investment banking, securities brokerage, transaction services, and wealth management.

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About Responsible Finance

We are the voice of the responsible finance industry working to increase access to fair finance. We support a strong and growing network of finance providers who are building resilient economies throughout the UK. Our network is locally responsive, tailoring services to the needs of the areas within which we operate. We offer a personal service, a supportive approach and a real alternative to traditional bank lenders and finance providers. At our heart is the idea of bringing social and economic benefits to people, places and businesses.

Our network provides access to finance for people and businesses that are often excluded; we aim to build hope, create opportunity and change lives – for us that’s responsible finance.

www.responsiblefinance.org.uk<http://www.responsiblefinance.org.uk>