

Mental Health First Aid England launches Startwell, a diagnostic service to create tailored mental health and wellbeing roadmaps for workplaces

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[Mental Health First Aid \(MHFA\) England](#) has announced the launch of Startwell, its new workplace mental health diagnostic service. Startwell is a people-first programme, driven by in-depth research and collaboration. It is designed to help organisations evaluate and redefine their workplace culture through positive mental health.

The service launches at a critical time for employers and employees alike. The pandemic has shifted the way we work and created a surge in demand for greater mental health support. At the same time, worries over returning to the workplace and issues such as the 'Great Resignation', are creating fresh challenges for business leaders. Despite these challenges, the pandemic also gives us an opportunity to rethink our approach by improving our ways of working and creating thriving workplace cultures.

Where other programmes can take a "one size fits all" approach to workplace wellbeing, Startwell provides a tailored consultation. It does so by working alongside clients, delivering a collaborative service with a human focus. It is suitable for organisations of all sizes, from SMEs finding their feet to large enterprise organisations with complex logistical challenges.

Evidence-based approach

MHFA England courses are grounded in research and rigorously tested, developed with input from clinical experts and those with lived experience of mental health issues. Startwell is no exception, taking an evidence-based approach, carrying out detailed analysis and putting people first at every stage. The immersive programme begins with extensive research, including sentiment surveys, focus groups, data deep dives and stakeholder interviews.

The result is an honest picture of the collective mental health of an organisation. This is framed by a true understanding of each workplace's specific needs.

Following the diagnostic process, the Startwell "Mental Health Playbook" offers clear recommendations for sustainable culture change. These recommendations will help guide the overall organisational strategy and set out the necessary tools needed to achieve it. Depending on the research outcomes, it could suggest ideas for training, motivating the workforce, tackling stigma, improving employee communications and more.

Demand for greater support on the rise

MHFA England research shows 25% of people have found it more difficult to bring their 'whole self' to work whilst working remotely. Since the onset of the pandemic, 35% report a decrease in motivation, 30% say they feel less connected with their team and 39% of people have increased feelings of loneliness or isolation.

The transition to hybrid working shows no sign of slowing, and company culture now extends far beyond what takes place within the office. Startwell incorporates this context into its diagnostic approach, providing organisations with a futureproofed consultation.

Many MHFA England clients want to develop a strategy to support the mental health and wellbeing needs of their people but have found it difficult to know where to begin. Startwell addresses these concerns and provides organisations with a golden opportunity to revisit and strengthen their workplace culture.

Startwell is born from nearly 15 years of MHFA England experience providing expert consultancy and training to over 20,000 workplaces in mental health skills and knowledge.

Startwell takes a "people first" approach. MHFA England consultants bring sector-wide expertise to guide business forward and upwards, without compromising on the organisation's vision, mission or values. Their consultants are seasoned experts in workplace mental health, with a long history on the frontline of mental health practice.

Startwell supports organisations to improve their overall wellbeing strategy to create long lasting culture change.

Vicki Cockman, Head of Client Delivery at MHFA England and lead on the Startwell programme explains:

"I have seen varying degrees of mental health literacy working with thousands of delegates and clients. There is always an overwhelming desire to support staff wellbeing, but leaders don't always know where to start. This is where we come in. Startwell works with organisations to understand their specific needs, values and aims, creating a holistic and bespoke service that serves the needs of everyone."

Commenting on the launch, Simon Blake, Chief Executive of MHFA England said:

"For 15 years MHFA England has been in workplaces delivering mental health first aid and mental health training. We have always been clear that any training must be part of a whole organisation approach to promoting mental health and workplace wellbeing. During that time, we have learned enormous amounts about how mental health and performance can fuel each other to drive business success. As a social enterprise we are single mindedly focused on improving the mental health of the nation. Through

Startwell we want to share our learning and expertise to help you drive business success.”

MHFA England client Mandy Stevens, Head of HR at IVC Evidensia, who has piloted the Startwell service, said:

“Startwell has such a great structure, and we were given so much support on our wellbeing journey. We would recommend the process to other organisations. We have noticed a shift in culture, our employees are now more open about their mental health, and it is helping to remove the stigma.

“We went through a lengthy process with the Startwell team at MHFA England so they could completely understand our business and what we were looking to get from the programme. We needed help to engage with our employees to understand what they were feeling. With over 14,000 staff across the UK, we would have struggled firstly to reach them and secondly to ask the right questions. Our key stakeholders met with our dedicated Startwell consultant who then surveyed our employees for feedback. This was followed up with a playbook of wellbeing recommendations.

“Since then, we have implemented training for staff and a large majority of practice leaders are now trained as Mental Health First Aiders. Quarterly wellbeing symposiums now take place, relevant and up to date wellbeing content has been added to our intranet and pocket cards have been created with top tips for employees.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors/About Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England

1. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England CIC is a social enterprise, established in 2009.
2. MHFA England’s vision is to improve the mental health of the nation by normalising attitudes and behaviours around mental health by developing the skills we need to look after our own and others’ wellbeing.
3. MHFA England’s mission is to train 1:10 of the adult population in mental health awareness and skills. To date 1:60 of the adult population is trained in MHFA England awareness and skills.
4. MHFA England will achieve its vision and mission by driving the transformation of workplace mental health and supporting NHS workers and Black and People of Colour organisations through subsidised training.

5. MHFA England offers a number of face-to-face and online training options to increase mental health awareness, knowledge and skills, including the internationally licensed product, Mental Health First Aid.
6. Mental Health First Aid is the mental health equivalent of physical first aid training and provides people with the skills and confidence to recognise the signs and symptoms of common mental health issues, start a conversation, and effectively guide a person towards the right support, be that self-help or professional services.
7. More information about MHFA England and its courses can be found at mhfaengland.org or by emailing info@mhfaengland.org.