

PRESS RELEASE

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MHFA England launches public consultation on new Workplace Mental Health First Aid Standards

London, 10 October 2025 — World Mental Health Day

Mental Health First Aid England® has today launched a public consultation on its draft Workplace Mental Health First Aid Standards. The standards set out, for the first time, clear, evidence-based guidance on best practice in embedding Mental Health First Aid in the workplace.

Poor mental health is now the leading cause of long-term sickness in the UK, contributing to record levels of economic inactivity. More than half of people out of work due to long-term sickness report depression, anxiety, or related conditions¹.

The cost to UK employers of poor mental health is estimated at £51 billion a year. Yet, evidence shows that organisation-wide early interventions, such as culture change and raising awareness of mental health issues, provide the highest return for employers, at £6.30 for every £1².

The creation of the standards supports the government's focus on helping people stay in and return to work. The Keep Britain Working review, due to be published this autumn, will set out how mental health support at work is central to tackling economic inactivity. These standards are a practical way of delivering that ambition. If implemented, they will help people thrive at work, boost productivity, and reduce the cost of poor mental health to our economy.

MHFA England® is the national authority on mental health first aid and the only licensed provider of Mental Health First Aid in England. Since 2007, the social enterprise has trained over 800,000 MHFAiders® across more than 20,000 workplaces, supporting organisations of every size and sector to build mentally healthy cultures.

¹ ONS, July 2023: Rising ill-health and economic inactivity because of long-term sickness, UK: 2019 to 2023

² Deloitte, May 2024: Mental health and employers. The case for employers to invest in supporting working parents and a mentally healthy workplace

Last year, MHFA England established the Association of Mental Health First Aiders® – the first and only membership body of its kind. Members receive exclusive access to a wide range of resources, from ongoing learning and qualifications to events and research, so they can fulfil their roles with confidence, skill, and care.

To develop the standards MHFA England has drawn on its experience and engaged with thousands of MHFAiders, MHFA Instructors, workplaces, and stakeholders. This has included representatives from the Federation of Small Businesses, Institute of Directors, Royal College of Nursing, Business in the Community, Social Enterprise UK, and the Association of Colleges.

Sarah McIntosh, Chief Executive of MHFA England®, said:

“Most of us spend a third of our lives at work, yet support for mental health in workplaces remains inconsistent and too often reactive.

Over the last 18 years, we have seen time and again how Mental Health First Aid saves lives and reduces stigma. For it to be truly effective, workplaces must fully embed it and take a whole-organisation approach.

Workplaces have the power to transform the nation’s mental health. These standards are about setting a new benchmark. Not box-ticking, but embedding prevention, early intervention, and culture change into every workplace.

Getting feedback via the consultation is vital to the future of workplace mental health. Together, we can make create workplaces where people, communities, and business thrive.”

The consultation, which will run for two months, invites feedback from employers, employees, MHFAiders®, MHFA Instructors, policymakers, membership bodies, trade unions, and mental health organisations.

The proposed standards include clear expectations on:

- Governance and strategic commitments
- MHFAider recruitment, representation, and role clarity
- Training and competency
- Infrastructure and operational support
- Support, debrief, and wellbeing of MHFAiders
- Reporting, evaluation, and continuous improvement
- MHFAider visibility and culture building
- Wider workplace mental health support
- Considerations for customers and suppliers

The consultation is part of MHFA England's '[Set the standard: Mandate the change.](#)' campaign. The organisation is calling for Mental Health First Aid to be mandated in all workplaces, alongside physical first aid, within the parameters set out in the new standards.

It will run until Wednesday 10 December 2025. Responses are invited via an online form. You can find out more and read the full standards [here](#).

The final Workplace Mental Health First Aid Standards will be published next year.

ENDS

For interviews or comment, or more information, please contact media@mhfaengland.org or Sarah Bowie sarah.bowie@mhfaengland.org.

NOTES TO EDITORS

- MHFA England CIC is a social enterprise, established in 2009
- MHFA England's vision is of a nation where everyone's mental health matters
- We work to create societal change so that we can all talk freely about mental health, because everyone should be able to offer and seek support when it's needed. Together we create mentally healthy workplaces where people, communities, and business thrive
- To date, 1 in 35 (January 2025) of the adult population is trained in MHFA England knowledge, awareness, and skills
- MHFA England drives meaningful change and transforms workplaces across the UK by delivering inclusive, market-leading and evidence-based mental health training and consultancy
- MHFA England offers face-to-face, online, and digital training options to increase mental health knowledge, awareness, and skills, including the internationally licensed product, Mental Health First Aid and a range of training for managers
- Mental Health First Aid is the mental health equivalent of physical first aid training. It provides people with the skills and confidence to recognise the signs and symptoms of common mental health conditions; start a conversation; and effectively guide a person towards the right support, be that self-help or professional services. It isn't a replacement for professional medical advice and support
- MHFA England uses its expertise in workplace mental health to support and advise employers on creating cultures where wellbeing and productivity flourish. Its consultancy approach is tailored to suit the needs of the

organisation and its people, working collaboratively, building on strengths, and recommending areas for improvement

- MHFA England extends its reach through subsidised training to the NHS and community groups that support young people
- Anyone who trains to be a Mental Health First Aider with MHFA England can become part of the Association of Mental Health First Aiders
- The Association of Mental Health First Aiders is the only membership body of its kind. It will help transform how we talk about and support mental health in the workplace and beyond
- MHFA England provide members with exclusive access to a wide range of resources, from ongoing training and qualifications to events and research
- More information about MHFA England and our courses can be found at mhfaengland.org or by emailing info@mhfaengland.org