



PeopleUnboxed



Becoming a Mental Health First Aider

Why is it important?



Only 16% of people feel able to disclose a MH problem to their managers



1 in 3 of the UK workforce have been formally diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point in their lifetime

Poor mental health affects us all. Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) can have a profound and positive impact on the overall wellbeing and mental health of their organisations and their communities.

You will be provided with the training you need, to be able to **make a difference.**

What skills will you need?



Your organisation will be looking for people who want to learn more about mental health and have a natural desire to want to **support others.**

To become a qualified MHFA, you will need to undertake the relevant training that your organisation will provide for you. This will teach you everything you need to know.

Most commonly this is a two-day course and, with our FAA Awards, you will receive an Ofqual-regulated qualification in mental health.



Find out more:
Level 2 'FAA Award in First Aid for Mental Health'

Alongside this, MHFA's require some **soft skills** to perform their role:



Relate well to others



Approachable and available



Good listener & empathetic



Trustworthy & confidential



Reliable



You will also have a desire to make a difference and offer ideas and support for wider organisational wellbeing activities.

What will the role entail?



Carrying out your role responsibly involves the following:

- ✓ Keeping yourself safe and well
- ✓ Communicating any concerns about the mental health and wellbeing of anyone, e.g. to an appropriate manager
- ✓ Following workplace policies and procedures on how MHFA is implemented
- ✓ Upholding your role as a MHFA alongside your other responsibilities
- ✓ Establishing appropriate boundaries with those you're supporting

- ✓ Positively and openly advocating for mental health, for example raising awareness and talking about it
- ✓ Contributing as required to wider organisational wellbeing activities
- ✓ Refreshing your skills every three years on a MHFA course



Mental Health First Aiders are encouraged to take a **refresher course every three years**. Just like physical first aid, regularly updating skills and knowledge empowers people to perform the role confidently and safely.

It's important to remember that MHFA courses **do not teach people to be therapists or counsellors**, or treat mental health conditions, as this can only be carried out by healthcare professionals.

Instead, you will gain the knowledge to identify when a person may have a condition and know where they can go to get help. Your role is to act as a point of contact and reassurance for a person who may be experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress.



How much time will it require?

Initial training:	Two days.
Ad hoc conversations with colleagues:	Best practice is conversations of up to 30 minutes. You may be required to proactively have conversations to help normalise talking about mental health, or conduct drop-in sessions.
Taking part in an internal MHFA network:	You may be asked to take part in internal wellbeing or MHFA meetings, which are commonly monthly or quarterly.
MHFA Refresher training:	Two days every three years.
Supplementary training:	Your organisation may offer you other training that will be beneficial to your role, e.g. as part of your personal development plan.

What now?

In the first instance you should **check in with your line manager**, to get their support and to find out whether your organisation are recruiting for the position and how to register your interest.

More often than not, you will be required to complete a short **application form** to outline why you would like to become a Mental Health First Aider, and what you feel you can bring to the role.



Are you ready to make a difference?