

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING



Mental health is at the heart of how we feel, think and act. Almost 1 in 3 people are affected by mental ill health whilst in work and this costs UK employers just shy of £35 billion every year.

A business can only thrive when its people are thriving. That's why more and more companies are taking a proactive, whole-organisation approach. This means building the resilience, wellbeing and productivity of all employees, whilst also supporting those with new or existing mental health issues.

You can do this through improved policies, programmes and communications, but for many businesses, the first step is training. Training your employees in mental health:

Builds understanding and reduces stigma. By lifting the lid on the mental health taboo, you'll create a more inclusive and fair workplace. Mental health will be acknowledged as central to personal wellbeing and work performance, and employees will be more likely to disclose their difficulties. As an organisation, you'll be better able to set strategy, mitigate risk and improve culture.

Encourages self-awareness and improves wellbeing. Like with physical health, we all have mental health and are sometimes more vulnerable to illness. Increased awareness of our own mental health and how to look after it helps employees to take greater responsibility for their wellbeing. A healthy workforce is a more productive and engaged one.

Upskills your employees to spot the signs of mental ill health. Giving your employees information about what to look out for helps them to pay more attention to changes in their colleagues. The sooner we spot that someone is struggling, the quicker we can start a conversation, prevent issues from worsening and encourage recovery.

Gives your employees the confidence to provide support. So often we say nothing for fear of saying the wrong thing, but well-honed listening skills can empower people to help their colleagues. A knowledgeable and upskilled team can offer support, comfort and signpost to further guidance. When professional help is hard to ask for or to access, colleagues can make a real difference.

Encourages recovery and keeps people in work. Informed colleagues can offer hope that recovery is probable. Work offers structure, relationships and purpose and it can be a key part of a person's recovery. With reasonable adjustments, you can help someone to stay in work as they progress through their recovery.

Heart of the City regularly hosts one-day mental health training sessions for members with [Noa Burger](#). Noa also runs half-day awareness-raising sessions and a two-day course which qualifies attendees as Mental Health First Aid Trainers, and you can do similar training with [MHFA England](#) and [St John Ambulance](#). In 2018, [the Health and Safety Executive recommended](#) that employers consider training their employees in Mental Health First Aid as part of their first aid approach. This is believed to be a first step towards future legislation.



Every business can be a force for good
Updated in March 2020 by Noa Burger for Heart of the City