



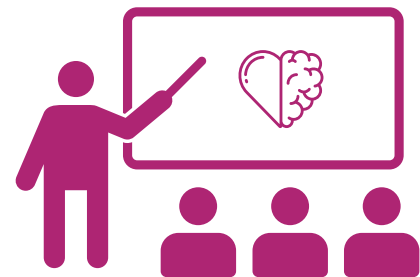
# Role of a Mental Health First Aider

## Mental Health First Aid

The training for becoming a Mental Health First Aider is designed to teach people how to spot the signs and symptoms of mental ill health and provide help on a first aid basis. In the same way as learning physical first aid, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) teaches people how to recognise those crucial warning signs of mental ill health and feel confident to guide someone to appropriate support. Embedding MHFA training within Gateshead Health will help encourage people to talk more freely about mental health, reducing stigma and create a more positive culture.

## Becoming a Mental Health First Aider

To become a Mental Health First Aider you must complete a two day MHFA course. This is our most comprehensive awareness and skills course, which includes a mix of presentations, discussions and group work activities. For more information on the course content, please contact [ghnt.gatesheadod@nhs.net](mailto:ghnt.gatesheadod@nhs.net).



Anyone can attend an MHFA course but an interest in mental health and wellbeing is essential. When you have completed the course, you will receive a certificate to confirm that you are a trained Mental Health First Aider.

## Outcomes and benefits

The course will:

- Give a deeper understanding of the issues that impact on and relate to people's mental health
- Teach practical skills that can be used every day, including being able to spot the signs and symptoms of mental health issues and feel confident guiding people towards support



## Outcomes and benefits continued...

Those who have attended the training have said it:



Raises awareness and mental health literacy



Reduces stigma around mental health



Promotes early intervention which enables recovery



Boosts knowledge and confidence in dealing with mental health issues

## The role

In general, the role of a Mental Health First Aider in the workplace is to be a point of contact for an employee who is experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. This interaction could range from having an initial conversation through to supporting the person to get appropriate help. As well as in a crisis, Mental Health First Aiders are valuable in providing early intervention help for someone who may be developing a mental health issue. Mental Health First Aiders are not trained to be therapists or psychiatrists but they can offer initial support through non-judgemental listening and guidance.

## Mental Health First Aiders are trained to:

- Spot the early signs and symptoms of mental ill health
- Start a supportive conversation with a colleague who may be experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress
- Listen to the person non-judgementally
- Assess the risk of suicide or self-harm
- Encourage the person to access appropriate professional support or self-help
- Escalate to the appropriate emergency services, if necessary
- Maintain confidentiality as appropriate
- Protect themselves while performing their role