



MPs to debate mental health first aid in the workplace

[Monday 14 January, 09:00 GMT] Parliament's Backbench Business Committee has announced that a debate on mental health first aid in the workplace has been scheduled for Thursday 17 January. Sponsored by a cross-party trio of MPs, Luciana Berger MP (Lab), Norman Lamb MP (Lib Dem) and Johnny Mercer MP (Con), and supported by over 60 cross-party MPs, the debate follows calls from the public, employers and mental health campaigners for the Government to follow through on its 2017 manifesto pledge to change the law and put mental and physical first aid on an equal footing in the workplace.

Led by Natasha Devon MBE, Bauer Media UK and Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England, the ['Where's Your Head At?'](#) campaign has been leading the calls for outdated Health and Safety legislation to be amended to ensure mental health is protected in the workplace.

Luciana Berger MP said: "I'm pleased to be leading this cross-party debate granted by the Backbench Business Committee in the House of Commons Chamber. We know that every year 300,000 people with a long term mental health condition lose their jobs.

This debate provides an important opportunity to put forward the proposal of putting mental and physical health first aid on an equal footing. A change in the law would be a step towards achieving real equality between physical and mental health; a principle that Parliament enshrined in law back in 2012 in the Health and Social Care Act.

"Employers across the country have an important role to play in supporting employees. This plan would ensure employers fully abide by that responsibility."

The debate announced last week follows October's presentation of a 200,000-strong [public petition](#) to Downing Street and the subsequent publication of an [Open Letter](#) to



the Government from over 50 business leaders highlighting employer support for the issue. Businesses supporting the change include PwC, WHSmith, Royal Mail and Thames Water.

Mental health campaigner, Natasha Devon MBE, said: “To have Members of Parliament from across all three main parties come together to support our Where’s Your Head At? campaign shows the extent to which this is a long overdue change.

“The government has been promising the public parity of esteem between physical and mental health since 2011. Yet still British people work in environments where their mental wellbeing isn’t given the same obligatory consideration by employers as their physical health. We can’t rely on the good will of business owners alone, this needs to be enshrined in law to ensure no one is left behind. This debate represents a crucial next step towards this important and necessary change.”

Simon Blake OBE, Chief Executive, Mental Health First Aid England, said: "Putting Mental Health First Aid on a legal par with physical first aid is simply common sense. Every sensible MP should support this simple, yet significant legislative change to ensure employees’ mental health is protected and promoted in the work place."

Paul Keenan, CEO, Bauer Media UK & European Radio, said: “A widely desired and sensible change in the law is getting nearer. With such cross-party support, more than 200,000 signatories to our petition and the support of more than 50 business leaders momentum to have mental health and physical health treated equally is building”.

Those who wish to support the campaign should contact their MP to ask them to join in the debate. Further information on this as well as a sample letter can be found at the campaign website www.wheresyourheadat.org.

-ENDS-

Notes to editors



About MHFA England

- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England is a community interest company (CIC), established in 2009.
- MHFA is the mental health equivalent of physical first aid training and provides participants with the skills and confidence to recognise the signs and symptoms of common mental health issues and effectively guide a person towards the right support, be that self-help or professional services.
- To date over 350,000 people in England are trained in MHFA skills.
- The core principles of MHFA include: spotting the signs of a mental health issue, helping to prevent issues from getting worse and giving confidence in helping someone who is experiencing an issue.
- As well as the Adult MHFA course, the organisation runs a number of tailored courses including Youth MHFA, Higher Education MHFA, Armed Forces MHFA and Workplace MHFA.
- MHFA England has a vision to normalise society's attitudes and behaviours around mental health by developing the skills we need to look after our own and others' wellbeing.
- More information about MHFA England and its courses can be found at mhfaengland.org or by emailing info@mhfaengland.org.
- News and announcements from MHFA England can be found at mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/news

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