

## Press release: Five female directors take mental health to top of Fortuna 50

11/03/2016

**[Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March]** Leading mental health training provider Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England has been named as one of the UK's fastest growing women-led small businesses on the second annual **Fortuna 50**. The index, launched by the Centre for Entrepreneurs and DueDil, was initiated by Downing Street to celebrate the success of women-led small organisations tying in with International Women's Day.

MHFA England provides courses teaching people to identify, understand and help a person who may be developing a mental health issue. The Board is made up of five female directors and led by Poppy Jaman, who is also a non-executive director for Public Health England and programme director for the **City Mental Health Alliance**. The Community Interest Company's annual revenue has grown by 52.4% over the last three years, placing them at number nine on the list of 50 women-led firms identified by DueDil from their database of over 10 million UK companies.

**Poppy Jaman, CEO for MHFA England said:**

"We are delighted to be featured on this list. All five of our company directors are women and as an organisation we are committed to supporting women's rights and wellbeing. I would like to offer my congratulations to the women who have made this diverse and inspirational list for their continued success." Ms Jaman commended the Fortuna 50 initiative for encouraging women to become entrepreneurs.

**Bernice Cole, Director of Finance & HR for MHFA England said:**

"I have been involved with MHFA England from the beginning and it's clear that our recent financial growth is driven not only by the increased demand for mental health awareness but also by the incredible work that our instructors are doing out in the community. We have more than 1,000 independent instructors who deliver MHFA courses throughout England and we would like to thank each of them for this achievement. Our inclusion on the Fortuna 50 is a wonderful recognition of the hard work of the wider MHFA community – women, men, people of all backgrounds coming together with the single purpose of educating the nation on mental health."

Ms Cole was recently invited to celebrate International Women's Day at 10 Downing Street among business leaders from around the country.

The full Fortuna 50 list can be seen at [centreforentrepreneurs.org/cfe-releases/fortuna-50-uks-fastest-growing-women-led-small-businesses-2/](http://centreforentrepreneurs.org/cfe-releases/fortuna-50-uks-fastest-growing-women-led-small-businesses-2/).

For further information about MHFA training visit [www.mhfaengland.org](http://www.mhfaengland.org).

-ENDS-



## Notes to editors

For further information about MHFA England, to arrange interviews or request photography, please email [media@mhfaengland.org](mailto:media@mhfaengland.org) or call 020 7250 8116.

## About MHFA England

1. MHFA England is a Community Interest Company established in 2009.
2. MHFA England delivers Mental Health First Aid training, the mental health equivalent of physical first aid, to businesses, healthcare professionals, schools and the public.
3. The training course provides participants with the skills and confidence to recognise the signs and symptoms of common mental health issues and effectively guide the person towards the right support services.
4. MHFA England's mission is to increase mental health awareness and reduce the stigma associated with mental ill health.
5. To date more than 114,000 people in England are trained in Mental Health First Aid.
6. As well as the Standard MHFA course, the organisation runs a number of other bespoke courses including Youth MHFA, Armed Forces MHFA and Workplace MHFA.
7. MHFA is an internationally recognised course, taught in 23 countries around the world. There are now over one million qualified Mental Health First Aiders worldwide.
8. More information about MHFA England and its courses can be found at [www.mhfaengland.org](http://www.mhfaengland.org) or by emailing [info@mhfaengland.org](mailto:info@mhfaengland.org)

## Biographies of MHFA England directors

### Poppy Jaman, Chief Executive Officer

Poppy Jaman is an internationally respected mental health advocate, national policy advisor and the CEO of successful social enterprise, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England.

With 18 years' experience of influencing and leading change in public mental health, Poppy has worked in a number of roles which have required her to challenge the public's perception of mental ill health. Through her diverse networks and non-executive board positions, Poppy has played an instrumental part in making mental health a high priority for public and private sector employers. An accomplished and skilled communicator, Poppy presents at high profile conferences and events and regularly contributes to national media interviews, both print and broadcast.

Holding a Masters in Business Administration and using her extensive experience of working across complex organisational environments, Poppy has taken MHFA England from a start-up social enterprise to a position of financial strength and international standing. Under Poppy's leadership,



MHFA England is now a commercially successful Community Interest Company, fulfilling its mission of increasing the mental health literacy of populations around the world.

Poppy currently holds non-executive board (NED) positions for the following organisations; Public Health England and NHS Workforce Race Equality Standards Advisory Board. She is also the Programme Director of City Mental Health Alliance (CMHA).

At policy level Poppy led the 2013 review of the Mental Health Pledge of the Department of Health's Responsibility Deal. She also played an instrumental role in securing the funding to develop and launch the Armed Forces MHFA programme, which has to date trained 6,600 people in Armed Forces MHFA. Poppy is currently campaigning to make Youth MHFA mandatory within schools and included as part of initial teacher training.

Internationally, Poppy works closely with the 24 other countries where MHFA is being proactively taught, reviewing best practice and comparing learnings. At the request of the Ugandan government, she visited the country to impart her knowledge on mental health literacy for the Ugandan Peoples Defence Force and a programme of mental health awareness training has since been rolled out within this community. Poppy is also supporting the development of MHFA in Bangladesh and in March 2015, she led a team to deliver the first ever MHFA Instructor training in the country.

### **Fionuala Bonnar, Chief Operating Officer**

Fionuala has been involved with Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England and the development of its training courses since 2006. As an original member of the National Training Team, she has been involved in the development of the two-day Standard MHFA product, commissioned the first Youth MHFA course and is a National Trainer for Armed Forces MHFA course. Fionuala also supported the CEO and Senior Leadership Team by assisting with the implementation of the organisation's initial governance. Fionuala was awarded an outstanding achievement award at the MHFA England annual awards ceremony in 2011 for services to the organisation. In June 2015 she was appointed in a full time position for MHFA England and is now the organisation's Chief Operating Officer.

A registered Mental Health nurse with a BSc in Health and Social Care, Fionuala has over 30 years of experience working in the public sector, working within Mental Health services as a nurse, manager, provider and commissioner. Recently and prior to her appointment as Chief Operating Officer, she was the Programme Manager Long Term Conditions- "Year of Care" Commissioning Model and the driving force behind the successful development of a currency and a methodology to commission and evaluate different models of care. This piece of work was shortlisted for the finalist awards by the Health Service Journal in 2014 and achieved finalist and "highly commended" in 2015. It was also shortlisted for the Local Government Chronicle awards in 2015.

With experience at working across all levels, Fionuala has commissioned services from large local and national providers in addition to small user led and independent organisations to deliver improvements or support business development. She is a dynamic leader, with proven skills in organisational transformation change and service improvement within health and social care, able to negotiate with stakeholders and ensure the objectives of programmes are met. Committed to



motivating and developing teams Fionuala has a style of leadership which brings out the best in people and this is proven in the results she achieves within a business setting.

### **Bernice Cole, Director of Finance and HR**

Bernice Cole has worked in the Third Sector for over 10 years, working for a variety of organisations including a housing association, a schools charity and a Fairtrade chocolate company.

She began her career within MHFA England as a Project Co-ordinator in 2009, managing the bookings for the MHFA instructor training courses. When MHFA England became a Community Interest Company in 2010, Bernice was promoted to the role of Business Manager.

In spring 2012, Bernice was further promoted to the position of Finance & Operations Manager and as part of this role, became responsible for some of the financial aspects of running a successful Social Enterprise.

In line with her increasing responsibility for the financial management of MHFA England, Bernice was appointed in April 2014 to the newly created position of Operations and Finance Director. Her role incorporates HR responsibilities and also requires Bernice to provide strategic input to the development of MHFA England as a commercially successful CIC. Following an organisational restructure in 2015 Bernice was appointed Director of Finance and HR.

As part of her professional development, Bernice achieved the Chartered Institute of Management Accountancy (CIMA) Diploma in summer 2014. Bernice holds a degree in psychology from the University of Leeds. She is also a qualified foreign languages teacher, with a Cambridge Certificate of Teaching English to Adults from the ELC Manchester Academy of English and is a qualified holistic massage therapist.

### **Caroline Hounsell, Director of Business and Partnerships**

Caroline Hounsell was one of the first Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England instructors to be trained by the organisation's founder, Betty Kitchener and joined the national MHFA England training team in 2007, taking on the role as national Quality Assurance Lead in 2012. In 2015 she was appointed into a new role as MHFA England's Director of Partnerships and Business.

During her time at MHFA England, Caroline has been involved with the research and content development of many training courses, including Youth MHFA, Armed Forces MHFA and MHFA Lite. In her capacity as the lead Director for Youth within MHFA England, Caroline has been selected to sit on the National Children's Bureau (NCB) Wellbeing in Schools Partnership Strategy Group. Her role within this strategy group is to help shape and define the objectives and outputs of the larger NCB partnership round table group, which includes over 40 high-level representatives from the education, charitable, public and youth sectors.

As a British Association Counselling Psychotherapist (BACP) accredited psychotherapist, Caroline draws on the experience gained through her private practice to further develop her knowledge and skills as a mental health professional. With a previous background as a careers consultant and psychometric testing expert for schools across Europe and UK, Caroline has a clear understanding of



how MHFA fits into the Youth market and is very informed around this subject area. She also has lived experience of being a young carer for a family member who had mental health issues.

Caroline is highly experienced presenter and Youth MHFA trainer. She speaks regularly at conferences and seminars across the country including the Optimus Education Mental Health & Wellbeing in Schools conference, Teachology conferences, Boarding Schools' Association seminars and Bradfield College 'Towards a Talking School' event.

### **Eleanor Miller, Director of Media and Communications**

Eleanor Miller is an accomplished communications professional, with a strong background in Public Relations. Over the past thirteen years, Eleanor has run her own consultancy business, offering communications and marketing services to a range of clients, including those from the commercial, public and third sectors. Her predominant client over the past two years has been Mental Health First Aid England, for which she has provided extensive communications advice and conducted national level media relations. Prior to setting up her own business, Eleanor was Head of PR for the government's marketing and communications agency, the Central Office of Communication.

Over the past 22 years, Eleanor has been responsible for delivering a number of high profile media relations campaigns, including those for the Royal Air Force, Department of Trade and Industry and Home Office. She has also assisted a number of small and medium sized organisations to achieve their communications objectives, including the generation of consistent and high quality media coverage.

Holding a degree in politics from the University of Birmingham and having recently undertaken a Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) Diploma in Crisis Communications, Eleanor also has an educated perspective on how marketing and communications fits into the public affairs arena and the importance of being prepared to communicate effectively in the face of a reputational crisis. Eleanor is also a trained Mental Health First Aider.