

Mental Health First Aid England appoints Simon Blake OBE as new Chief Executive

[Wednesday 8 August, 12:15 GMT] Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England CIC is pleased to announce the appointment of Simon Blake OBE as our new Chief Executive with effect from 3 October 2018.

Simon Blake is currently the Chief Executive of the National Union of Students Group (NUS), a post he has held for the past three years. In that time, he has led on a number of key areas, including publishing their 6-year strategic framework, establishing group-wide KPIs focused on membership satisfaction and overhauling the NUS Extra Student discount proposition.

Prior to joining NUS Simon was Chief Executive of Brook – the health charity for young people. Previously he worked at the National Children’s Bureau, where he held a number of positions including Assistant Director of Children’s Development and Director of the Sex Education Forum. He is a Governor at Bath Spa University, a Member of the British Universities and College Sport Inclusion Board, a Non-Executive Director of Endsleigh Insurance and Deputy Chair of Stonewall. He is also a Chartered Companion of the Chartered Management Institute. In 2011, Simon was awarded an OBE for services to the voluntary sector and young people.

Announcing his appointment Professor Mark Watson-Gandy, Chairman of MHFA England, said “Simon has an excellent track record of working in senior strategic roles within the not for profit and commercial sectors. We are confident he will bring formidable strategic vision and operational energy to MHFA England. We hope that he will take us from strength to strength and greatly help in delivering our new and ambitious five-year strategy. On behalf of the entire Board, I would like to congratulate him on his appointment. We look forward to welcoming him as the leader of the team”.

Commenting on his new position, Simon said, “I am delighted to be joining MHFA England.

Under Poppy Jaman's leadership MHFA England has grown into a business with a social purpose and I am looking forward to achieving the aim to train one in ten of the population in Mental Health First Aid skills. Our challenge at MHFA England is to achieve parity with physical first aid and the proposed legislative changes we are campaigning for will go a long way to enabling this to happen".

-ENDS-

Notes to editors

- 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 290,000 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 other's wellbeing.
- More information about MHFA England and its courses can be found at www.mhfaengland.org or by emailing info@mhfaengland.org.