

## **World Mental Health Day 10<sup>th</sup> October: Healthcare Communications Association (HCA) announces new training and awareness partnership with Mental Health First Aid England (MHFA England)**

**[Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017]** On World Mental Health Day, the Healthcare Communications Association (HCA) and Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England are pleased to announce the launch of a new partnership to deliver tailored training and awareness programmes for healthcare communications professionals.

The HCA is committed to helping support our members in attracting and keeping great talent within the sector. Supporting good mental health is an important component of achieving excellence in people management. Therefore, as part of the HCA's commitment to champion this on behalf of the healthcare communications sector, we are partnering with MHFA England to deliver mental health training programmes for senior leaders within our sector.

Announcing the initiative, HCA CEO Mike Dixon says: "Many healthcare communication professionals will have worked on initiatives within mental health. But how often do we consider our own mental health or the mental health of those we work with? And yet good mental health is so vital for our wellbeing. Our aim is to help increase the number of mental health 'champions' amongst senior team leaders within our sector. These champions can then help identify, understand and respond to any signs of mental illnesses within their teams as well as raise general awareness across their organisations."

He continued: "When more people are equipped with the tools they need to start a dialogue, more people can get the help and support they may need early, before it becomes a problem."

Poppy Jaman, CEO, MHFA England, praised the HCA for including Mental Health First Aid as part of their 2018 training programme available for members. "Recent research by the Public Relations Communications Association suggests that around 60% of communications employees have experienced mental ill health. When staff wellbeing is better supported, we know that employees and organisations benefit in terms of retention, staff engagement, productivity and job satisfaction. Engaging senior leaders is a great first step, however providing staff, and in particular line managers, with some form of training in mental health should be a core part of an effective workplace wellbeing strategy in this industry. It's encouraging to see organisations like the HCA leading by example on World Mental Health Day and making Mental Health First Aid training available to its members."

The one day mental health awareness and skills course will be based on MHFA England's highly successful 'MHFA Champion' programme, tailored for the healthcare communications workplace.

*The first HCA / MHFA England course for senior people managers, from across all disciplines within our member organisations, will be held on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018. For further information about the course and to book a place, please visit the HCA website.*

To find out more about MHFA England and its training visit [mhfaengland.org](http://mhfaengland.org) or to download MHFA England's Workplace Wellbeing Toolkit visit [mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/campaigns/wmhd17](http://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/campaigns/wmhd17)

### **Some workplace mental health facts:**

Stress, anxiety and depression are the biggest cause of sickness absence in our society. Mental ill health costs UK employers an estimated £35 billion each year - broken down, that's £10.6 billion in sickness absence, £21.2 billion in reduced productivity, and £3.1 billion in replacing staff who leave their jobs for mental health-related reasons.

### ***Work related stress accounted for 45% of all working days lost to ill health in 2015/16***

Simple steps to improve the management of mental health in the workplace will allow employers to save 30% or more of these costs – at least £8 billion a year - but more importantly, it maintain the wellbeing of the talented people who are so key to their business.

### **About MHFA England**

1. MHFA England is a Community Interest Company, established in 2009.
2. 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 services.
3. To date over 206,000 people in England are Mental Health First Aid trained.
4. The core principles of MHFA include: spotting the signs of a mental health issue, helping to prevent issues from getting worse and give confidence in helping someone who is experiencing a problem.
5. As well as Workplace MHFA courses, the organisation runs a number of bespoke courses including Adult MHFA, Youth MHFA, Armed Forces MHFA and Higher Education MHFA.
6. MHFA has a proven international track record and has consistently demonstrated its effectiveness through evaluation – details can be found at [mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/research-and-evaluation](http://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/research-and-evaluation).
7. 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).

### **About the Healthcare Communications Association (HCA)**

The HCA proactively represents and champions on behalf of the healthcare communications sector. A not-for-profit organisation, with membership comprising in-house teams, agencies and individuals working in national and global healthcare communications across diverse business sectors, the HCA provides the collective voice to establish, maintain and improve best practice and quality standards in our speciality. The HCA takes the leading role in providing education and shared learning, helping organisations and individuals develop their professional skills. With cross-industry membership, the HCA also aims to provide unique business intelligence and networking opportunities for its members.