

Report into Military Mental Health Training launched on World Mental Health Day

[Thursday 13 October 2016]: On World Mental Health Day the lead professor of a revolutionary study into Armed Forces mental health spoke at an event confirming the need for a 'game changing' skills training course for the Armed Forces community. Professor Diane Crone of the University of Gloucestershire presented the final report of an evaluation into the Armed Forces Mental Health First Aid training programme in Newcastle City Hall. This was one of five regional events run by Mental Health First Aid England to mark World Mental Health Day on 10th October.

The University of Gloucestershire evaluation 'Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) in the Armed Forces Community', published in August 2016, found that the programme had positively influenced mental health literacy among members of the UK Armed Forces community while reducing stigma and misunderstandings surrounding mental health.

Speaking at the World Mental Health Day event, Professor Crone, lead for the evaluation said, "The evaluation involved both trainers and trainees on the MHFA Armed Forces course over a period of 18 months. We found that there were significant increases in trainee's knowledge, attitudes and confidence in dealing with and supporting people with mental health problems, following attendance at the course. Furthermore, and most importantly, we found that these changes were still evident ten months after the course had been attended."

The evaluation findings confirm this training continues to be a valuable source of support for the British Armed Forces and their families. If implemented, this training could provide a great support to the reported 70% of serving personnel who fear seeking help for mental health issues and for the third of personnel who feel unable to tell their families [1].

MHFA England, the Community Interest Company which delivers the training, has approved 180 specialist instructors to deliver a MHFA course tailored to the Armed Forces community. To date, over 6,000 members of the serving community and their families have qualified as Armed Forces Mental Health First Aiders.

Poppy Jaman, CEO of MHFA England, said:

"The theme for World Mental Health Day 2016 was this year 'psychological and mental health first aid for all' and so Professor Crone's findings are particularly timely as they underline the need for the training in this particular community. It confirms the feedback we already have from the Armed Forces community that MHFA is a vital source of support for the unique mental health challenges faced by military personnel.



MHFA England

“With 180 Armed Forces MHFA instructors delivering the course within this community we are in a strong position to continue rolling out training and we hope that the necessary action is taken to improve the mental health of our country’s serving personnel, veterans and their families.”

In May 2016, Armed Forces Mental Health First Aid was described as a ‘game changer’ by the Centre for Social Justice in a report which recommended that the training should be introduced to all levels of the British Armed Forces. Speaking at the CSJ report launch, Johnny Mercer MP, who sits on the Government’s Defence Committee, said: “This report addresses some key areas and I would urge the Ministry of Defence to look at each recommendation contained within it.”

In November 2015, serving personnel, veterans, high-ranking military officers, and MPs attended an event at the House of Lords at which a wide range of people from the Armed Forces community out to support the need for the MHFA training. The key messages from the event can be viewed at mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/news/mhfa-england-calls-further-funding-support-armed-forces-mental-health-training-programme

-ENDS-



MHFA England

Notes to editors

1. A copy of the evaluation 'Mental Health First Aid in the Armed Forces Community' can be found at mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre

For further information about MHFA England, to arrange interviews or request photography, please email media@mhfaengland.org or call 020 7250 8388.

Footnotes:

Kings College London, 2011: The stigma of mental health problems and other barriers to care in the UK Armed Forces

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 members of the public, employees, the Armed Force community and staff within youth and education settings. The training provides participants with the skills and confidence to recognise the signs and symptoms of common mental health issues in someone and effectively guide the person towards the right support services.
3. The core principles of MHFA include: spotting the signs of a mental health issue, knowing how to stop the distress from getting worse and creating confidence in helping someone who is experiencing an issue.
4. To date over 147,000 people in the UK are trained in Mental Health First Aid skills.
5. As well as Adult MHFA and Armed Forces MHFA, the organisation runs a number of other bespoke courses including Youth MHFA and Workplace MHFA.

More information about MHFA England and its courses can be found at mhfaengland.org or by emailing info@mhfaengland.org

