MHFA ENGLAND SUMMARY OF THE MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID IN THE WORKPLACE (MENTOR) STUDY

BACKGROUND
Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an international programme which trains individuals to recognise the signs of mental ill health in others and offer timely and appropriate support.

MHFA is not specifically a workplace intervention, and only a small number of the 70 studies on MHFA have looked at MHFA in the workplace.

METHODS
Three studies were done as part of this research.

THE FIRST STUDY
The first study used internet searches to find out what mental health and suicide awareness training is available for UK workplaces. The courses were compared on their content, format, duration and cost.

THE SECOND STUDY
The second study surveyed organisations whose employees had received MHFA training using an online questionnaire. Employees were asked questions about how staff were selected to attend MHFA training, how the uptake impact of MHFA was recorded and what the outcomes of MHFA training were for individuals and organisations.

THE THIRD STUDY
The third study interviewed employees from the organisations that had participated in the survey about their experiences and opinions of MHFA training, how they used MHFA skills in the workplace and how Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAiders) were promoted and supported in the workplace.

RESULTS

THE FIRST STUDY
The first study identified four MHFA courses, 25 mental health-related courses and 14 suicide-related courses available for use in UK workplaces. Courses were between 45 minutes and three days long, and were most often delivered face to face. Courses covered a range of mental health-related topics, with shorter courses covering fewer topics in less detail than longer courses.

THE SECOND STUDY
The second study analysed data from 139 employees from 81 organisations and found that:

- The main reasons for their organisation taking up MHFA training was in recognition of the impact of mental health issues (32.4%), and because it was part of the organisation’s wellbeing strategy (19.4%)

- Organisations most often invited all employees to attend MHFA training (36.7%), or employees requested (28.8%) or were selected (22.3%) to go on a MHFA course.
MHFA is one of many different mental health training courses available for the workplace. MHFA appears to be well received in the organisations whose employees were surveyed and interviewed. Participants noted that the training provides increased knowledge about and confidence in addressing mental ill health, and report that MHFA skills are being used in the workplace after the training. The results note that there is a lack of clarity around how MHFA is implemented in the workplace and how its effectiveness can be measured by organisations.

Overall, the research supports the core claims of the MHFA programme, which are to increase mental health awareness, knowledge and confidence in how to support a person experiencing mental ill health and encourage help-seeking behaviour.

CONCLUSIONS
MHFA is one of many different mental health training courses available for the workplace. MHFA appears to be well received in the organisations whose employees were surveyed and interviewed. Participants noted that the training provides increased knowledge about and confidence in addressing mental ill health, and report that MHFA skills are being used in the workplace after the training. The results note that there is a lack of clarity around how MHFA is implemented in the workplace and how its effectiveness can be measured by organisations.

Overall, the research supports the core claims of the MHFA programme, which are to increase mental health awareness, knowledge and confidence in how to support a person experiencing mental ill health and encourage help-seeking behaviour.

MHFA ENGLAND’S NEXT STEPS
In response to the MENTOR study’s findings we will now:

1. Strengthen our existing guidance for those trained as Mental Health Aware (Half Day) and as MHFA Champions (One Day).


3. Use these findings to inform research we are commissioning with the Centre for Mental Health to further investigate the impact of MHFA in the workplace.

For more information on Mental Health First Aid England training in the workplace visit: mhfaengland.org