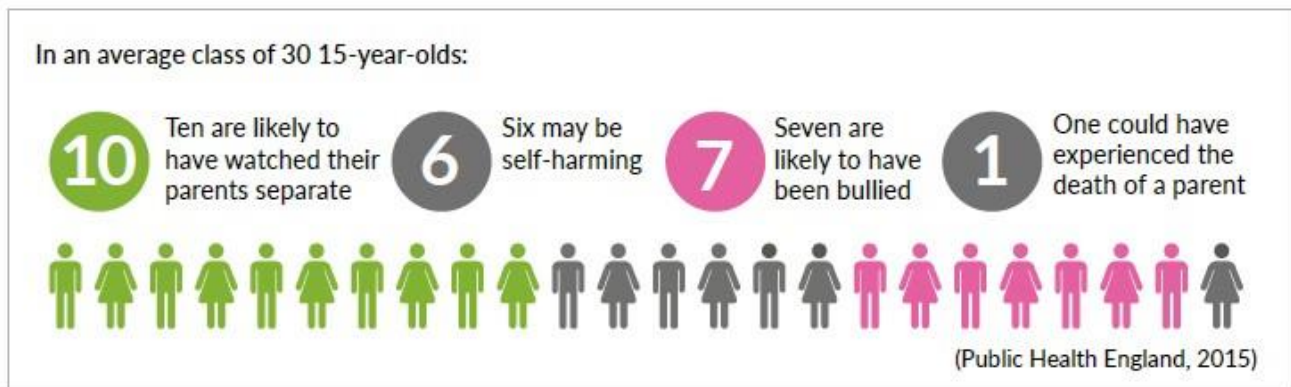


## Why Youth Mental Health First Aid?

Mental health and emotional issues often develop during adolescence. Half of young adults with mental health issues have symptoms by the age of 15, and nearly 75% by their late teens.



First aid is the help given to an ill or injured person before medical treatment can be obtained. Youth Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is the help given to a young person experiencing a mental health issue before professional help is obtained. The aims of Youth MHFA are to:

- Preserve life where a young person may be a danger to themselves or others
- Intervene to prevent the emotional or mental health issue developing into a more serious state
- Provide comfort to a young person experiencing a mental health issue
- Empower a young person to access appropriate professional help
- Promote the recovery of good mental health
- Raise awareness of mental health issues in the community
- Reduce stigma and discrimination

Currently, only around a quarter of people who need treatment for mental ill health receive it. With access to an adult with MHFA skills we can provide early intervention in guiding a young person to the support they need.

## What do you learn on a Youth MHFA course?

Youth MHFA provides teachers and frontline professionals working with young people the skills and confidence to spot common signs and triggers of mental health issues, as well as the knowledge and confidence to help. Through a mix of presentations, discussions and activities, the course covers these key topics:

- What is mental health?
- Depression and anxiety
- Suicide and psychosis
- Self harm and eating disorders

Within each section there is clear focus on the issues faced by young people today, including bullying/cyber bullying and substance misuse.

The Youth MHFA One Day course has been designed specifically with schools and colleges in mind and fits perfectly into inset days and busy timetables. Over 25,000 people have already taken a Youth MHFA course in England, including staff in over 500 schools and colleges.

Completing the Youth MHFA One Day course designates you as a **Youth MHFA Champion**. A Youth MHFA Champion is skilled in understanding how to spot the signs and symptoms of mental health issues in young people and will have the confidence to guide the young person to a place of support.

## About MHFA England

MHFA England is a community interest company (CIC) with the objective of raising mental health literacy and reducing stigma and discrimination in mental health across the whole community. Since our beginnings in 2007, our instructors have delivered courses to over 188,000 people in England. We are part of an international mental health training community who have trained over two million people worldwide in MHFA skills. To find out more, please visit our website at [mhfaengland.org](http://mhfaengland.org).

MHFA has a proven international track record and has consistently demonstrated its effectiveness through evaluation – details can be found at [mhfaengland.org/evaluations-and-research](http://mhfaengland.org/evaluations-and-research). Every MHFA course is delivered by a quality assured instructor who has attended our instructor training programme accredited by the Royal Society for Public Health. Youth MHFA instructors have been recruited due to their diverse backgrounds in education and youth work, experience in mental health, and their ability to engage and motivate participants. Our robust quality assurance processes ensure that our instructors are consistently delivering to an agreed high standard which is continually monitored.

## Programme delivery plan

Year one of the Youth MHFA in Schools programme was launched in April 2017 and the first course deliveries took place soon after in June. We anticipate course deliveries for the remainder of the year to be concentrated in July and September/early December due to availability of staff and inset days.

Funded by the Department of Health, 100 Youth MHFA One Day courses will be delivered which equates to over 1,000 places available. One representative from each invited school may attend a course, with the exception of host schools who are offered four additional places. This will ensure that at least one person in a third of all secondary schools in England will receive the training and become a Youth MHFA Champion by the end of year one of the programme. A similar number of courses will be delivered in years two and three of the programme, at the end of which all state secondary schools in England will have at least one Youth MHFA Champion.

A team of researchers from University College London will also be conducting an evaluation of the Youth MHFA in Schools programme. This will be in the form of a questionnaire filled out by delegates at the end of the course and a second follow-up questionnaire three months later. Schools will also be approached to take part in interviews.

To find more information and resources on the Youth MHFA in Schools programme, please visit [mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/schools-programme](http://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/schools-programme).

## Expert reference group

To meet the needs of schools and the teaching community, the programme is guided by an expert reference group (ERG) led by:

- Chair: Caroline Hounsell, MHFA England Director, Youth Lead and psychotherapist
- Co-chair: James Brown, former head of year for Brentwood School and a non-executive director of MHFA England
- Jessica Agudelo, Regional Lead and Youth MHFA instructor

The ERG includes representation from young people with lived experience, parents and expert advisors from the fields of Clinical Psychiatry, education and Public Health. With a wide range of experience, the ERG will inform and advise the programme as it progresses over the next three years.



**MHFA England**