

News story: New £15 million programme to help train mental health 'first aiders'

A new £15 million programme will see up to 1 million people trained in basic mental health "first aid" skills. The programme will improve personal resilience and help people recognise and respond effectively to signs of mental illness in others.

The campaign, designed and delivered by Public Health England (PHE), will help people assess their own mental wellbeing and learn techniques to reduce stress.

There will be an online learning module designed to improve the public's knowledge, skills and confidence on mental health.

These are skills for life, as most of us will at some point either experience poor mental health or care for a loved one trying to cope. The campaign will aim to build resilience and give people advice, based on what has been shown to work, so that we can all be better at supporting people experiencing poor mental health.

The government will invest £15 million in the campaign. It will launch next year for 3 years. PHE will work closely with Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England and other mental health organisations to ensure the campaign builds on the knowledge and experience of the sector.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

I want to use the power of government as a force for good to transform the way we deal with mental health problems right across society, and at every stage of life.

Tackling the injustice and reducing the stigma associated with mental health conditions is a priority for me, which is why today I set the goal of providing 1 million members of the public with basic mental health awareness and first aid.