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**Suffolk Family Carers approved to deliver Youth Mental Health First Aid Training**

*1 in 10 children will be diagnosed with a mental health issue before the age of 151 and for those aged 15 to 24 years, suicide is the second most common cause of death*2

[27 July 2017] Suffolk Family Carers have today been approved by Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England to deliver Youth MHFA training to those who work with, live with, teach or support young people aged 8 to 18 years. The skills-based training teaches people to spot the signs and symptoms of mental health issues, confidently provide support on a first aid basis and guide a young person towards the support they may need.

Suffolk Family Carers are known for using their expertise, influence and innovation to empower and improve the lives of family carers of all ages and their families across Suffolk. Staff from the organisation have now completed the seven-day Youth MHFA England Instructor Training Programme, accredited by the Royal Society for Public health. They are now qualified to deliver courses which teach participants to:

* Spot the early signs and symptoms of mental ill health in young people
* Start a supportive conversation with a young person who may be experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress
* Listen to a young person non-judgementally
* Assess the risk of suicide and self-harm in a young person
* Guide the young person to access appropriate professional support or self-help strategies
* Escalate to the appropriate emergency services if necessary
* Maintain confidentiality as appropriate
* Protect themselves whilst performing their role

Sarah Potter, Mental health & Wellbeing Manager at Suffolk Family Carers commented: “Mental ill health in young people is a growing health concern, with half of all lifetime cases of mental health issues starting by the age of 14. It’s therefore vital that we put the right measures in place to ensure that young people get the help they need and at the earliest possible stage. Around one in 10 children have a diagnosable mental health issue – roughly three children in every classroom – so upskilling those who work with young people to be able to support them in this way is crucially important. Mental Health First Aid is a robust evidence-based training that will not only increase the mental health literacy of those taking this course, but will help them turn this awareness into action by teaching them skills to support young people in emotional distress.”

A recent participant added: “I feel that it is really important to keep talking about mental health and I like that this course is aligned with physical first aid. The trainer gave good examples from professional experiences and was sensitive to potential impacts.”

Suffolk Family Carers have a range of course options available and are currently able to offer the Youth MHFA Two Day course at an introductory price of £1,600 for up to 16 delegates and the Youth MHFA One Day course for £800 for between eight and 16 delegates.

To book a course or find out more information please contact Suffolk Family Carers Wellbeing Team 01473 835438 or email wellbeing@suffolkfamilycarers.org

ENDS

**Notes to Editors**

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 194,000 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 the Youth MHFA course, the organisation runs a number of bespoke courses including Adult MHFA, Higher Education MHFA, Armed Forces MHFA and Workplace 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](https://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.

**References**

1. Office for National Statistics (2005)
2. Office for National Statistics (2010)