

First aid for children and young people's mental health (Youth Mental Health First Aid)

An innovative new way to support young people in Wales was launched in Bridgend County Borough this week.

The first Youth Mental Health First Aid training course was delivered as a pilot to a group of front line staff in Maesteg on 12 and 13 July.

It was organised by the Welsh Assembly Government's National Training Team and Mind Cymru in conjunction with Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO).

The Youth Mental Health First Aid training programme is an important addition to the existing Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Wales programme which helps frontline workers to recognise the symptoms of mental distress and how to provide initial help and support while guiding people towards appropriate help. Around 4000 people to date have received the adult MHFA in Wales.

Following the instructor training programme more than 50 trainers will soon also be able to deliver the new Youth Mental Health First Aid training aimed specifically at those people caring for or working with Children and Young People.

Front line staff that work with Young People in Bridgend County were enthusiastic in participating in this pilot. One delegate commented, "I would recommend this (YMHFA) Training to all who work with Young People as a mandatory course alongside others such as basic first aid".

Another delegate said,

"The training was fab! I usually lose interest in courses but I was kept engaged the whole 2 days. The content was exactly what we needed".

The feedback that was received was really valuable and will inform the rollout of the training across Wales.

Edwina Hart, Minister for Health and Social Services, said: "The continuation and expansion of Mental Health First Aid demonstrates our commitment to promote the emotional and mental wellbeing of young people in Wales.

"Providing support for people in the community who are experiencing mental distress and widening the understanding of mental illness is crucial if we are to tackle the stigma often associated with mental health problems.

"The development of Youth Mental Health First Aid is important to help those who work or care for young people to recognise the early warning signs of mental distress. This will work in tandem with the Assembly Government's schools counselling strategy to ensure that all pupils across Wales will have someone to turn to if they need help or support".

Lindsay Foyster, Director at Mind Cymru said "The pilot forms an extremely important part of the development of any new course. We are delighted that the pilot for Youth Mental Health First Aid was well received and enabled front line staff to further contribute to this flagship programme".

For more information on Mental Health First Aid (Wales) and Youth Mental Health First Aid, please contact:

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