

No. 482/2018

23 August 2018

Our Ref: P26/18

**Petition – Make It Compulsory To Have a Mental Health First Aider at Work -  
“Where’s Your Head At” Campaign:**

**To: All Branches**

Dear Colleagues,

Organisers of this petition and the “Where’s Your Head At” campaign have approached the Union to support their campaign by generating support for their national petition of the Government Minister calling for the introduction of a health and safety law, compulsory requirement to have Mental Health First Aiders in the workplace, similar to medical/physical first aiders, as covered currently by the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981.

The “Where’s Your Head At” campaign aims to improve the mental health of the nation by ensuring employers look after the wellbeing of their workforce in just the same way as they are required to protect physical wellbeing. The campaign makes the point that evidence shows that the earlier a mental health issue - like stress, anxiety or depression - is detected the easier it is to manage and treat. The workplace is where people spend most of their adult lives but unfortunately it’s also a place where mental well-being is the most neglected. This campaign wants to make it easy for workers to be able to talk about their mental health at work issues and additionally seeks to ensure that there are trained Mental Health First Aid colleagues on site who know how give initial support and to point people in distress, in the direction of any help needed.

A Mental Health First Aider is a volunteer person in the workplace or organisation who has been trained to identify, understand and help someone who may be in distress and be experiencing a mental health issue. They aren’t a therapist, psychiatrist or clinician, they are someone who is able to listen, converse, reassure and respond, even in a crisis - and even potentially stop a crisis from happening. This is because they’ve received training to recognise warning signs of mental ill health, and have developed the basic skills to support someone and signpost them to professional help and support.

The “Where’s Your Head At” campaign and this petition is led by Natasha Devon MBE, the writer and social critic. Natasha is a well-known mental health campaigner. She delivers classes and conducts research with teenagers and parents on mental health, body image and social equality. Devon has a weekly column in the Times Educational Supplement. She has worked closely with a number of UK mental health charities and organisations and with “Mental Health First Aid England”. She was appointed as the first ever Department for Education (DfE) Mental Health Champion for Schools in 2015 but the role was scrapped in May 2016. Devon continued to give evidence to the House of Commons Health and Education Select Committee.

Please support the petition calling on Sarah Newton, the Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work to commit to updating Health and Safety Legislation to ensure that employers and organisations have the same obligation in law to provide mental health first aiders as they do medical first aiders.

**Let's Change The Law to Protect Our Mental Health and Sign The Petition at:-**  
<http://www.wheresyourheadat.org/>

**And Please spread the word!**

Yours sincerely



**Dave Joyce**  
**National Health, Safety & Environment Officer**