

Qualification Specification

STA Award in Mental Health First Aid at SCQF Level 6

CIMSPA® Endorsed

Version 26.1

©2026

This qualification is accredited by Qualifications Scotland Accreditation

STA Award in Mental Health First Aid at SCQF Level 6

Qualification Number: R961 04

Accredited from: 27/10/2026
Accredited to: 31/10/2031

Unit Title

This qualification consists of 2 mandatory units.

Unit Title	Code	SCQF Credit Level	SCQF Level
Mental Health Awareness	UX38 04	1	6
Mental Health First Aid	UX39 04	1	6

Contact Learning Hours - 14
Non Contact Guided Hours - 6

Total Notional Learning Hours: 20 hours

Qualification Delivery

The recommended contact hours for this qualification is 14 hours, which includes teaching and assessing but excludes breaks.

The course may be run over 2 days, but can also be delivered over a period of weeks, with the minimum of each training session being 2 hours.

The course can be delivered:

- Fully face-to-face or live remote tutor-led online sessions (14 hours)
- Via blended learning using a combination of distance learning through STA Mental Health online programme (up to 2 hours), and face-to-face delivery (minimum 12 hours).

Note: Distance learning must be completed prior to the face-to-face element and all assessments must take place face-to-face.

The ratio for this qualification is a maximum of 12 learners to 1 tutor.

©STA 2026

Introduction

Mental health can be described as a state of wellbeing in which an individual realises their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to contribute to their community. Mental health is a fundamental aspect of overall health and wellbeing and encompasses an individual's emotional, psychological and social wellbeing and influences how people think, feel and behave, how they respond to stress, how they relate to others and how they make decisions in everyday life.

Everyone has mental health, and an individual's mental health can change over time in response to personal, social, environmental and situational factors. Understanding mental health therefore forms an important part of promoting health, wellbeing and supportive communities.

The role of a mental health first aider is to provide immediate, short-term support to an individual who may be experiencing a mental health difficulty or crisis. This may include listening in a non-judgemental manner, providing reassurance, communicating calmly and respectfully, and helping the individual to access appropriate support.

Mental health first aiders can make an important contribution to creating safer, more compassionate and supportive environments by promoting awareness, encouraging early intervention and responding appropriately to signs of distress.

Qualification Objective

The STA Award in Mental Health First Aid qualification is designed to provide learners with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to recognise when an individual may be experiencing a mental health difficulty or emotional distress and to respond appropriately. Mental health first aid focuses on early recognition, appropriate initial response and the provision of immediate support while further help is identified or accessed.

Target Learners

The STA Award in Mental Health First Aid is suitable for learners who act as an appointed mental health first aider at work or in voluntary and community activities, or for personal interest and development.

©STA 2026

Entry Requirements

- Be 16 years of age or older at time of assessment.

There are no previous qualifications or experience required, however it is advisable that learners have a minimum of level 1 in literacy and numeracy or equivalent.

Qualification Validity Period / Requirements

This qualification is valid for a period of 3 years. Learners need to retake the qualification before the certificate expiry date to remain qualified.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) strongly recommends that first aiders undertake annual refresher training during any three-year certification period. This will help learners maintain their skills and keep up-to-date with any changes to first aid procedures.

Providing a learner's STA Award in Mental Health First Aid certificate has not expired by more than 1 calendar month (e.g. expired on 5th, started course on or before 4th of the following month), the contact hours may be reduced to 8 hours over 1 day.

STA Mental Health First Aid requalifications can be delivered:

- Fully face-to-face (8 hours)
- Via blended learning using a combination of distance learning through STA Mental Health online programme or live remote tutor-led online sessions (up to 2 hours), and face-to-face delivery (minimum 6 hours).

Note: Distance learning must be completed prior to the face-to-face element and all assessments must take place face-to-face.

Learners must be assessed against all learning outcomes and assessment criteria in the units. To attend the shorter re-qualification course, learners should provide evidence of their previous STA Award in Mental Health First Aid qualification.

©STA 2026

Progression

STA Award in Mental Health First Aid holders may wish to develop knowledge and skills further by completing additional STA first aid qualifications or CPDs.

Experienced mental health first aiders may wish to become an STA First Aid Tutor / Assessor to pass on the knowledge and skills they have acquired through training to others.

Alternatively, learners may wish to complete additional STA qualifications such as manual handling, fire marshal, lifesaving, swimming teaching and pool plant, to support a career in the leisure industry.

Assessment Format

Pass / Fail

©STA 2026

Assessment Methods

STA Award in Mental Health First Aid is tutor assessed through on-course activities and completion of an end of course multiple-choice question theory assessment paper.

Throughout the course, learners must complete on-course activities to practically apply their understanding of role specific tasks, integrating knowledge, skills, and competencies of a mental health first aider.

The multiple-choice question theory assessment paper is to be completed independently by learners under exam conditions, with the tutor or other approved person, acting as the invigilator. Learners must achieve a minimum mark or higher to successfully pass the multiple-choice question theory assessment paper.

All learning outcomes and assessment criteria in the units must be achieved in line with the most current version of the STA Mental Health resource manual in order for the learner to be deemed competent and pass the qualification.

Tutors should refer to the STA Mental Health First Aid assessment strategy document for detailed guidance on the assessment process.

Re-assessment

If a learner is unsuccessful in the course assessment, the learner is only required to re-sit the required assessment element, for example, if a learner fails the multiple-choice question theory assessment paper, they are only required to re-sit the unit(s) they failed.

The re-sit of an assessment must be completed within 6 weeks from the original assessment date. All re-takes must be registered with Safety Training Awards.

Due to the type of qualification being a license to practice competency-based qualification, we can only permit 1 assessment re-sit. If a learner has been unsuccessful following a re-sit, the learner must undertake another full course of instruction.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Safety Training Awards is committed to ensuring individuals with additional needs, disabilities, temporary illness or injury, or other adverse circumstance outside their control, are not unfairly disadvantaged when undertaking first aid qualifications or assessments. For further information, please refer to the policies section on the Safety Training Awards website: https://www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk/policies/

©STA 2026

Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) may be applied for depending on a learner's qualification. Should RPL be applied, learners must complete all assessment requirements. For further information, please refer to the policies section on the Safety Training Awards website: https://www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk/policies/

Awarding Organisation Policies

A full list of awarding organisation policies are available on the website: https://www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk/policies/

Industry Standards

- Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 and The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1982
- First aid at work: The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981: Guidance on Regulations (L74)
- First Aid Awarding Organisation Forum Delivery Standards and Assessment Principles
- Resuscitation Council (UK) Guidelines.

Tutor / Assessor Requirements

Tutors must have the skills, knowledge, experience and competency to be able to tutor / assess the subject.

Tutors must be approved by Safety Training Awards and provide evidence of:

1. Holding STA Award in Mental Health First Aid (or acceptable equivalent), or current medical registration as detailed in Appendix 1
2. Holding STA Level 3 Award in Education and Training (or acceptable equivalent as detailed in Appendix 2)
3. Maintaining occupational competency by providing evidence of continuing professional development (CPD).

©STA 2026

IQA Requirements

Internal quality assurers (IQAs) must have the skills, knowledge, experience and competency to be able to quality assure the subject.

IQAs must be approved by Safety Training Awards and provide evidence of:

1. Holding STA Award in Mental Health First Aid (or acceptable equivalent), or current medical registration as detailed in Appendix 1
2. Holding STA Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice (or acceptable equivalent as detailed in Appendix 3), or have completed STA Internal Quality Assurance CPD.

Note: Internal quality assurers cannot quality assure a course for which they were a learner, tutor and / or assessor.

Minimum Course Resource Requirements

- STA Mental Health resource manuals – Each learner is required to have their own copy of the resource manual to keep during and after the course, in order to have access to the theoretical knowledge of the qualification
- Sufficient audio-visual (AV) equipment and training aids should be available to facilitate learning using varying teaching methods
- All equipment must be cleaned, serviced and maintained in line with manufacturers instructions and relevant legislation / industry guidance
- The venue must meet acceptable health and safety standards and be conducive to learning, with sufficient size, floor surfaces, seating, writing surfaces, toilet facilities, ventilation, lighting, heating, access, exits, cleanliness, absence of distracting noise.

©STA 2026

Appendix 1

Acceptable Evidence of Competency in Mental Health First Aid

All Tutors, Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers must have occupational knowledge and competence in mental health first aid.

Acceptable evidence includes:

- Holding a current regulated Mental Health First Aid Certificate (issued by an Ofqual / SQA Accreditation / Qualifications Wales / CCEA Regulation recognised Awarding Organisation / Body (or equivalent)
- Current registration as a Doctor with the General Medical Council (GMC)
- Current registration as a Nurse with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)
- Current registration as a Paramedic with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Appendix 2

Acceptable Tutoring / Assessing Qualifications

Current qualifications (available for new tutors / assessors to undertake):	Tutor	Assess*
Level 3 Award in Education and Training	✓	✓
Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training	✓	✓
Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training	✓	✓
Level 3 Award in Teaching and Assessing in First Aid Qualifications (RQF)	✓	✓
Cert Ed / PGCE / B Ed / M Ed	✓	✓
SVQ 3 Learning and Development SCQF Level 8	✓	✓
SVQ 4 Learning and Development SCQF Level 9	✓	✓
TQFE (Teaching Qualification for Further Education)	✓	✓
Planning and Delivering Learning Sessions to Groups SCQF Level 6 (SQA Unit)	✓	✓
SCQF Level 6 Award in Planning and Delivering Learning Sessions to Groups (SQA Accredited)	✓	✓
L&D Unit 6 Manage Learning and Development in Groups SCQF Level 8 (SQA Accredited)	✓	
L&D Unit 7 Facilitate Individual Learning and Development SCQF Level 8 (SQA Accredited)	✓	
L&D Unit 8 Engage and Support Learners in the Learning and Development Process SCQF Level 8 (SQA Accredited)	✓	
Carry Out the Assessment Process SCQF Level 7 (SQA Unit)		✓
Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment		✓
Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement		✓
Level 3 Award in Understanding the Principles and Practices of Assessment		✓
Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement		✓
L&D Unit 9DI Assess Workplace Competence Using Direct and Indirect Methods SCQF Level 8 (SQA Accredited)		✓
L&D Unit 9D Assess Workplace Competence Using Direct Methods SCQF Level 7 (SQA Accredited)		✓

©STA 2026

Other acceptable qualifications:	Tutor	Assess*
CTLLS / DTLLS	✓	✓
PTLLS with unit 'Principles and Practice of Assessment' (12 credits)	✓	✓
Further and Adult Education Teacher's Certificate	✓	✓
IHCD Instructional Methods	✓	✓
IHCD Instructor Certificate	✓	✓
English National Board 998	✓	✓
Nursing Mentorship Qualifications	✓	✓
NOCN Tutor Assessor Award	✓	✓
S / NVQ Level 3 in Training and Development	✓	
S / NVQ Level 4 in Training and Development	✓	✓
PDA Developing Teaching Practice in Scotland's Colleges SCQF Level 9 (SQA Qualification)	✓	✓
PDA Teaching Practice in Scotland's Colleges SCQF Level 9 (SQA Qualification)	✓	
PTLLS (6 credits)	✓	
Regulated Qualifications based on the Learning and Development NOS 7 Facilitate Individual Learning and Development or NOS 6 Manage Learning and Development in Groups	✓	
Training Group A22, B22, C21, C23, C24	✓	
Learning and Teaching – Assessment and Quality Standards SCQF Level 9 (SQA Unit)		✓
A1 Assess Candidates Using a Range of Methods or D33 Assess Candidates Using Differing Sources of Evidence		✓
Conduct the Assessment Process SCQF Level 7 (SQA Unit)		✓
A2 Assess Candidate Performance through Observation or D32 Assess Candidate Performance		✓
Regulated Qualifications based on the Learning and Development NOS 9 Assess Learner Achievement		✓

Appendix 3

Acceptable Internal Quality Assurance Qualifications

L&D Unit 11 Internally Monitor and Maintain the Quality of Workplace Assessment SCQF Level 8 (SQA Accredited)
Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
Conduct the Internal Verification Process SCQF Level 8 (SQA Unit)
Regulated Qualifications based on the Learning and Development NOS 11 Internally Monitor and Maintain the Quality of Assessment
V1 Conduct Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process or D34 Internally Verify the Assessment Process
Internally Verify the Assessment Process SCQF Level 8 (SQA Unit)

©STA 2026

Unit Specification

Unit 1	Mental Health Awareness	
Learning Outcomes:	**Assessment Criteria:**	
1. Understand the importance of mental health	1.1 1.2 1.3 1.4 1.5 1.6	Define mental health Describe the mental health continuum Explain the benefits of positive mental health Explain the effects of poor mental health Identify risk factors of mental ill health for: • Older adults • Adults • Adolescents • Children Identify sources of further information and support for mental health issues
2. Understand the importance of self-care	2.1 2.2	Explain the importance of self-care Describe coping strategies
3. Be aware of common mental health conditions	3.1	Identify characteristics of common mental health conditions: • Anxiety • Panic Attacks • Depression • Postnatal Depression • Bereavement • Self-Harm • Stress • Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) • Phobias • Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) • Autism • Bipolar Disorder • Psychosis • Schizophrenia • Eating Disorders • Disruptive Behaviour and Dissocial Disorders • Neurodevelopmental Disorders • Suicide • Addiction and Substance Misuse
4. Understand mental health in the workplace	4.1 4.2 4.3 4.4 4.5 4.6	Identify roles and responsibilities relating to mental health in the workplace Identify risk factors of work-related stress Recognise signs of work-related stress Identify the effects of work-related stress Explain how to promote a positive mental health culture within the workplace Describe workplace action plans relating to mental health

©STA 2026

Unit Specification

Unit 2	Mental Health First Aid	
Learning Outcomes:	**Assessment Criteria:**	
1. Understand the role and responsibilities of a mental health first aider	1.1 1.2 1.3 1.4	Identify the role and responsibilities of a mental health first aider Identify the qualities of a mental health first aider Describe the boundaries of a mental health first aider Identify the principles of incident reporting
2. Understand how to provide first aid to a casualty experiencing mental ill health	2.1 2.2 2.3 2.4	Describe different approaches and techniques to support a casualty experiencing mental ill health Describe the principles of a dynamic risk assessment Describe the importance of effective communication with a casualty experiencing mental ill health Describe crisis intervention
3. Be able to provide first aid to a casualty experiencing common mental health conditions	3.1	Identify how to provide first aid to a casualty experiencing: • Anxiety • Panic Attacks • Depression • Postnatal Depression • Bereavement • Self-Harm • Stress • Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) • Phobias • Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) • Autism • Bipolar Disorder • Psychosis • Schizophrenia • Eating Disorders • Disruptive Behaviour and Dissocial Disorders • Neurodevelopmental Disorders • Suicide • Addiction and Substance Misuse

©STA 2026