

HIPS/16/45 – Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS) injecting in Scotland: in depth study of injecting practices, health implications and service utilisation

Injection of new psychoactive substances (NPS) is increasing in Scotland, from <1% of active injectors in 2008 (3/2071) to 10% (227/2213) in 2015/16 according to data gathered in the national Needle Exchange Surveillance Initiative (NESI) Scotland survey. In some areas, this figure reaches 29%. The latest NESI survey (data not yet published) also found the prevalence of hepatitis C to be higher amongst those who mainly inject NPS (62%) than amongst mainly heroin injectors (55%). Other health harms associated with NPS use have been found to include: accidents and injuries, mental health impairment, stroke and myocardial infarction¹. However, there is a dearth of research in Scotland on most aspects of NPS injecting pathways, risk behaviours and health consequences. This proposed study will conduct in-depth interviews with NPS injectors in Scotland to establish the circumstances and consequences of NPS injecting and to help inform appropriate treatment approaches.