

HIPS/19/51 - Improving the Mental Health of Farmers: What types of remote intervention and support are acceptable and feasible to best support improved outcomes

Farming is worth approximately £917 million per year in Scotland. However, farmers are at high risk of poor mental health, with one farmer per week (UK) taking their own life. There is still a perceived stigma around mental illness and farmers are more likely to turn to their own communities for support rather than formal services. When they do seek help, many prefer to use remote or anonymous supports (telephone/internet). However, we do not know which types of intervention are most acceptable and the evidence base for interventions for farmers is limited. This study will begin to address this gap by working with the farming community to establish preferences for help. We want to assess which types of support are more acceptable and effective in supporting farmers' mental health e.g. psychological therapy or social support(s) or a combination of both. We will assess preferences and engagement with a range of options and collect outcomes as an early indication of what works. This will help to identify a 'best-option' intervention for a future trial of its effectiveness. We will also assess whether we can recruit and retain farmers for a future study to measure the impact of such a 'best-option' intervention.