

HIPS/23/46 – Improving Young People’s Health Outcomes Through Addressing Emotionally-Based School Non-Attendance Within The Scottish Context

Extended school absence is a growing concern across the UK and has significant implications for the health and wellbeing of children and families affected. Young people who do not attend school regularly are at risk of poorer health and educational outcomes, contributing to widening health inequalities. When the primary cause is underlying emotional or psychosocial factors such as anxiety, it is known as emotionally-based school non-attendance (EBSNA). Evidence shows that young people with neurodevelopmental disorders or mental health conditions are more likely to be absent from school, but less is known about the support young people experiencing EBSNA receive are supported by schools and the wider impact on their health, education and family life. In Scotland, there is currently no standardised way to record EBSNA-related absence at school level and approaches to supporting the well-being of pupils experiencing EBSNA vary widely. This project will explore the management, and experience of EBSNA in Scotland. By identifying how EBSNA absences are recorded and managed, what guidance exists and how it is implemented, and examples of good practice, we aim to enhance understanding and facilitate better management of EBSNA to improve health and educational outcomes for those young people affected.