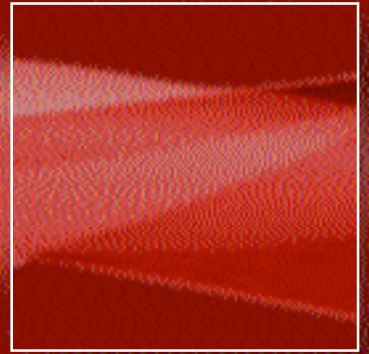
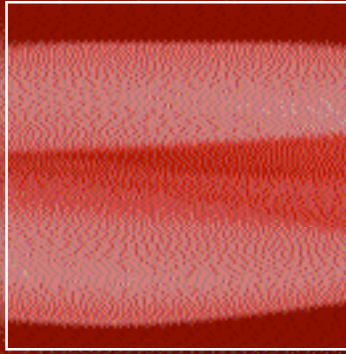
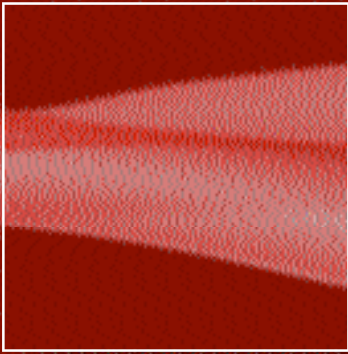


Identification and Management of Pupils with Mental Health Difficulties: A Study of UK Teachers' Experience and Views



Research report for **NASUWT**

Identification and Management of Pupils with Mental Health Difficulties: A Study of UK Teachers' Experience and Views

Research report for **NASUWT**

Barnet, Enfield and Haringey 
Mental Health NHS Trust



What I'm worried about is the number of missed opportunities that must happen in schools because of our ignorance of mental health, [...] but how staggering it was to hear the research and numbers involved: I was really gobsmacked. (GD)

For one teacher, such training will help schools tackle the 'problem' rather than its behavioural manifestation.

We're on the front line with these kids and I think, therefore, we need strategies, ways of being able to recognise it, we need ways of being able to talk about it, we need to know what to do about it. [...] any way that we can deal with that, any way that we can stop treating it just as a disciplinary matter, then I think that would be great. (HO)

Most teachers believe that the inclusion policy has led to increasing demands on teachers. While in general agreement with the positive benefits of inclusion, they nevertheless argue that teacher training must change commensurate with the broader spectrum of abilities and limitations now found within classes.

Somewhere along the line the Government needs to actually put some money into training teachers to recognise mental illness [...] because of our inclusivity we are going to get more children who have major issues that we are all not going to be able to deal with. (JS)

Some teachers felt disillusioned with and somewhat forsaken by their LA. Promises to provide additional teacher training following greater inclusion never materialised.

It's sought to get on the integration and the inclusion agenda without really thinking about what the consequences of that are and without really supporting it properly, [...] it promised to put into place support within schools, to educate teachers on how to deal with these problems and that was never forthcoming. [...] Schools lost faith in the system because the authority couldn't accommodate the very real needs of the kids in the schools. They couldn't support them in the schools and they'd removed the external provision. (KB)

Teachers are, therefore, quite aware that their traditional pedagogic skills need to be supplemented with new skills relevant to their current pupil population.

All teachers need to have at least basic training on how to work with children with different problems and mental health problems. (JS)

It ought to be the case that people have got an understanding of the network of support that's available and an awareness of the support that a child should be entitled to and it shouldn't be left to chance or the skill or the judgement of an individual. (SS)

Indeed, some teachers insist that training in this area "is utterly valuable and must be given" (RT). However, most teachers insist that it would be almost impossible to add new training areas to the existing teacher qualification.

So many teachers these days are trained on the PGCE, which is 18 weeks in school, 20 weeks in college and you're out there. Well, you can't possibly fit something else in there. (SB)

Thus, as some suggest, teachers may be more inclined to accept training in mental health-related skills through INSET and professional development (PD) courses.

It would be very helpful if there was some sort of outreach whereby teachers could have some sort of, there is this lovely word 'Inset' which means 'in-service training', could have some formal input as to the early recognition because sometimes you feel, gut instinct, there is something. (SS)

Teachers who have received some mental health-related training empathise with those who have not; they believe they are fortunate in this regard.

How can they be expected to pick it up if they don't know what they are looking for? We are very lucky in this school to know what attention deficit disorder would look like, what depression could look like, anger would look like. We are very lucky to know that, but the only reason we know that is we have had the training on it. (GR)

However, none of the teachers believed that such courses were available.

The [local] Professional Development Centre is where all the teachers go for teacher

Table 4: School Characteristics

School type: selection	Per cent	School type: funding	Per cent
Selective	5	LA	74
Non-selective	35	Foundation	6
Denominational	14	Voluntary-aided	9
Open enrolment/comprehensive	28	Voluntary-controlled	1
Special school	6	Independent	7
Pupil referral unit	2	Multiple	2
Other	4	Other	0.5
School type: location		Number of pupils per class	
Inner city	16	<20	16
Outer city	25	21-25	15
Urban	37	26-30	61
Rural	22	31-35	8
School type: level			
Nursery, infant and primary	31		
Secondary	62		
Special	7		

Information pertaining to teachers' perceptions of the levels of SEN and mental health difficulties among their pupils was collected and these figures are displayed in table 5 below.

Table 5: SEN and Mental Health – Pupil Population Characteristics

	Mean	Std. dev.	N
Perceived proportion of pupils with SEN statements by school type			
Nursery/infant/primary	4.3	4.6	50
Secondary	8.7	10.5	91
Special	99.9	0.4	7
Perceived proportion of pupils on the SEN register by school type			
Nursery/Infant/Primary	16.8	11.6	50
Secondary	15.2	14.0	91
Special	100.0	0.0	7
Perceived proportion of pupils with suspected MH problems by school type			
Nursery/infant/primary	7.5	15.0	50
Secondary	8.4	13.7	91
Special	55.4	39.1	7

Considering the proportion of pupils on the SEN register, together with those with suspected mental health difficulties and average class sizes, indicates that on average, a typical class would include 4-5 children on the SEN register and 2-3 children with suspected mental health difficulties.

NASUWT

Hillscourt Education Centre, Rose Hill,
Rednal, Birmingham B45 8RS
Tel: 0121 453 6150
Fax: 0121 457 6208/9
E-mail: nasuwt@mail.nasuwt.org.uk
Website: www.teachersunion.org.uk