

## Project ASSENT June Newsletter



This is the first newsletter for our project, which started in April this year. We will be sending out updates at bi-monthly intervals to interested parties. Read on for

further information about Project ASSENT, which is funded by the Nuffield Foundation (Law in Society Programme) for two and a half years.

### Project Summary

Our project is concerned with how adults with impairments of capacity and/or communication (AwICC) are included and considered within the ethical and governance frameworks in England and Wales. We aim to develop an ethically-sound, legally-robust strategy for including AwICC in research within the context of existing legislation. By recognising personal autonomy in all its gradations, and identifying practical strategies and resources that endorse the greater agency of AwICC, we seek to enhance the MCA (2005) Code of Practice.



## Meet the ASSENT Research Team

*Our core research team includes the disciplines of speech & language therapy, clinical psychology, occupational therapy and the law.*

Principle Investigator - Dr Karen Bunning  
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## There are three key objectives that set out the intended impact for project ASSENT.

### Objective 1

Recognition of and support for the agency and decision-making power of Adults with Impairments of Communication and/or Capacity (AwICC). We will work on the conceptualisation, application and adoption of a continuum of decision-making that incorporates the spectrum of ability for self-determination from informed consent/refusal (the decision made by a person deemed to have legal capacity), through degrees of engaged assent or dissent (the person's active dis/agreement to something through a process of interaction), to passive dissent (lack of observable response or extreme passivity).

### Objective 2

Enhancements to the MCA (2005) Code of Practice (CoP: DfCA, 2007). The establishment of practical strategies for considering, seeking out and evidencing the wishes and preferences of AwICC (paragraph 11.29). In correspondence with the rights of AwICC as defined above, the focus is on the pedagogical process whereby an individual who has impairments of communication and/or capacity actively engages with the options presented in relation to research participation.

### Objective 3

Inclusion of AwICC in research: increased understanding of how to design research inclusively. This will result in a broader spectrum of the population being represented in research, ultimately leading to the development of rehabilitation interventions, medical treatments and psycho-social therapies that are relevant and proven for AwICC.



### Future Updates

If you would like further information on our project, please contact Dan Leeson: [D.Leeson@uea.ac.uk](mailto:D.Leeson@uea.ac.uk) with your name, area of work/interest and contact details. We will send you our bi-monthly newsletter and keep you informed of project updates.

*Thank you for reading the ASSENT June newsletter*