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| **Project ASSENT September Newsletter** |
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| This is the second newsletter for our project ASSENT, which is funded by the Nuffield Foundation (Law in Society Programme). | **Progress update**We have focused on stage 1 of our project, which concerns the ethico-legal landscape for carrying our research in England and Wales. Our Working Group has also been hard at work developing tools for stage 2 of our project. For further information – read on! |

**The Working Group**

*Our working group is made up of experts-by experience representing stakeholder interests, including mental health disorders, aphasia after stroke, head injury, intellectual disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and dementia. Representatives are from local user-led organisations in Norwich or else individuals with already established connections to the University of East Anglia.*

The first block of Working Group meetings took place in July. There were four meetings in total. The group attended to the co-production of research materials, including the project’s information sheet, questionnaire and the interview topic guide with questioning route.

The next block of meetings was scheduled for some months hence. In response to the concern expressed by members about the disruption to their working relations and their ongoing engagement with the project, we organised a series of update meetings every 3 months. This is so that the Working Group is kept up to date with project developments and has opportunities to ask questions, express opinions and maintain their interest in the project.

**Materials in accessible formats**

We aim to make materials in accessible formats so that everyone can hear about our project. The Newsletter is available in Standard Text, Easy Read, Easy Text and Audio. All Working Group materials were created in each of these formats. We continually ask for feedback to ensure that they are meeting individual needs. For example, one Working Group member highlighted that they prefer pictures of people rather than the use of cartoons in Easy Read materials.

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| **Update on Stage 1 of Project ASSENT: the ethico-legal landscape****1.1 Guidance from the Health Research Authority (HRA)**We have looked at the current guidelines published by the HRA on how to include adults with communication and/or understanding difficulties in research. We wanted to see what support was available and what kind of guidance was provided for researchers. **1.2 The law**We have begun work to consider how the current law supports the inclusion of adults with communication and/or understanding difficulties. As part of this work, we have accessed the parliamentary debates that led to the development of the Mental Capacity Act (2005) and the Code of Practice. **1.3 Literature review**We have been reviewing the research literature over a period of 10 years, looking for how adults with communication and/or understanding difficulties have been included in research in relation to the mental Capacity Act (2005).  |
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**Future Updates**

If you would like further information on our project, please contact Dan Leeson: 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 September newsletter*