

Project ASSENT Newsletter

September 2022



Headed by: University of East Anglia
Funded by: Nuffield Foundation



Progress Update

Project ASSENT extension is coming to an end soon. The project which started initially in 2018 to 2021 was extended by a year to give us time to gather more feedback about the online guidance and to make it better. We set out to do this by asking for feedback from our key stakeholder groups - researchers, members of MCA-approved Research Ethics Committees and practitioners who have interests in adults with capacity-affecting conditions through focus group discussions. We also engaged with adults living with capacity-affecting conditions and their carers or supporters through paired or one-to-one interviews.

Update on focus group discussions and interviews

We completed all the focus group discussions and interviews, as well as the data analysis. There were lots of useful suggestions on how we can make the online guidance better. In addition to checking the online guidance for grammatical error and spelling mistakes, feedback was grouped into six main categories:

1. Presentation – includes the use of colour, font size, pictures and animations as well as avoiding abbreviations.
2. Media – addition of audio to text as an option, using appropriate pictures and animations.
3. Navigation – making it easier for users to move through the guidance as well as tracking progress through the online guidance.
4. Scenarios – ensuring the cases are relevant, easy to understand and appropriately placed within the RLO.
5. Language – making sure the meaning is clear using the fewest possible words.



6. Resources – addition of checklist and other resources that researchers can use when considering the inclusion of adults with capacity and/or communication difficulties in research.

We have converted the feedback into action points for the company helping us to develop the online guidance.

We are making changes to Project ASSENT online guidance

Changes suggested are being made by Marshall E-Learning Consultancy, the company that helped us develop the online guidance. We plan to ask some stakeholders to look through the online guidance once changes have are completed.

Impact funds

Alex Tiseo, who was a researcher on Project ASSENT and a postgraduate researcher in law, examined the proposed changes to the Mental Capacity Act (2005) Code of Practice which was open to consultation from 17th March to 14th July 2022. From his findings, we wrote and submitted a brief report as part of the online consultation. We also wrote a large report which was sent to the Department of Health and Social Care as well as the Ministry for Justice. We are looking forward to the outcome on this public feedback.

Publications

The most recent:

Bunning et al. Lost Voices: Inclusive research under the Mental Capacity Act (2005) for England and Wales. *RCSLT Bulletin*.

It is a summary article on the work of ASSENT Project accepted by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists Bulletin. This is due to be published in the Winter edition.

Submitted for publication:

Authors: Killett, A et.al; Langdon, PE

Title: Inclusion of adults with capacity-affecting conditions and/or communication difficulties in research: triangulation from a mixed methods study of common practice and values across multiple stakeholders. It has been submitted to BMJ Open Journal. We are awaiting completion of the review process.

Staff training days:

Research Ethics Committee members

We continue to share our findings on Project ASSENT with Health Research Authority (HRA) Research Ethics Committee (REC) members. In addition to the three sessions we reported in our last update, we have completed two more sessions in London – Oxford Circus and Birmingham. Attendance at the sessions has been great and the case scenarios developed for ASSENT RLO (online guidance) have been popular. They have asked if they could use the case scenarios for their regular training. We have two more face-to-face sessions coming up, details below:

- 20th October – Reading
- 24th November - London South.

Next year, we will continue to share our findings with Research Ethics Committee (REC) members during their online training sessions.

Advisory Group

The Advisory Group for Project ASSENT extension had their second meeting on Wednesday 27th July. The group was updated with the progress of the project and plans for the end of project report. Although it was meant to be the final meeting for the group, it was agreed that once changes to the online guidance have been finalised, the group will meet one more time so that they can see the final output.

Project ASSENT Seminars series 2022

Project ASSENT seminar series has now come to an end. The last seminar held on Thursday 14th July, was hosted online by UEA and it was led by Dr Anne Killett. She presented findings on: Stakeholders views on the reasoning and underlying values about inclusion and exclusion of adults living with capacity and/or communication difficulties. The seminar was attended by 36 people.

Dr Killett also had the opportunity to share the findings of project ASSENT at the event organised by the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (specialist section of neurology)

Future Updates



If you have previously signed up to our newsletter mailing list, we will send our quarterly newsletter to you and keep you informed. You can also sign up to receive the newsletter by emailing:

S.Vout@uea.ac.uk or O.Jimoh@uea.ac.uk