

HAPPY NEW YEAR and WELCOME to the third edition of the ASSIST quarterly newsletter. For any queries or further information, please contact project manager, Alison: [alison.howarth@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:alison.howarth@ucl.ac.uk)

## Publications

### Assessing the impact of online postal self-sampling for sexually transmitted infections on health inequalities, access to care and clinical outcomes in the UK: protocol for ASSIST, a realist evaluation

Read [our protocol paper](#) (Gibbs J *et al* in *BMJ Open* 2022)

- Our mixed-method, realist evaluation will provide understanding of what works for whom in which context for this complex digital health intervention
- The realist approach enables evaluation of the upheaval of COVID-19, and its impacts on data access, quality & implementation processes
- The economic evaluation will provide vital information on the cost-effectiveness and impact on health equity of online postal self-sampling (OPSS) services
- The implementation evaluation will inform future service delivery

## OPSS during COVID-19

We have begun analysis of data from [Natsal-COVID](#) (a population survey) and [RiiSH COVID](#) (a survey of MSM) to examine use of OPSS services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings will help contextualise our analysis of routinely collected data (from clinic-based and OPSS services) during the pandemic.

## Patient & Public Involvement & Engagement



ASSIST is part of an exciting, new cross-study approach to patient and public involvement and engagement in sexual health research. We are working with the [HPRU on Blood Borne and Sexually Transmitted Infections](#), [SEQUENCE Digital](#) and [Natsal-4](#) to offer meaningful and funded opportunities for members of the community to influence several research studies at different stages. This will include the early design of studies, working with us to design recruitment materials and sharing research with wider audiences. We are currently recruiting participants for this cross-study [Community Advisory Panel](#) via our networks.



## Interviews

A total of 94 service users, and 59 staff & stakeholders have been interviewed. Analysis is underway, and we hope to present preliminary findings at the [STI & HIV 2023 World Congress](#).

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