

# Virtual Engagement Rehabilitation Assistant (VERA) in the community

<b>Submission date</b> 23/01/2025	<b>Recruitment status</b> Recruiting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b> 05/03/2025	<b>Overall study status</b> Ongoing	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 22/01/2026	<b>Condition category</b> Nervous System Diseases	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

The Virtual Engagement Rehabilitation Assistant (VERA) is a new digital tool designed to help patients with their rehabilitation goals. VERA provides access to personalized resources like exercise videos, appointment reminders, well-being questionnaires, and more. This study aims to evaluate how well VERA works in community rehabilitation settings for people with neurological conditions.

### Who can participate?

Up to 20 patients receiving neurological community rehabilitation will be invited to participate. Additionally, up to 20 staff members from the rehabilitation teams will also be invited to take part.

### What does the study involve?

Participants will use VERA on an iPad for up to six weeks as part of their rehabilitation. They will receive training on how to use VERA and will have access to personalized resources provided by their rehabilitation team. Data collected will include demographic information, health and well-being measures, and feedback on the VERA training. At the end of the six weeks, participants will take part in a semi-structured interview.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Participants may benefit from having easy access to personalized rehabilitation resources, which could support their recovery. There are minimal risks involved, mainly related to the time commitment required for training and using VERA.

### Where is the study run from?

The study is being conducted by the University of Central Lancashire in collaboration with the Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust and Liverpool University Hospitals Foundation Trust.

### When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

February 2024 to April 2026

Who is funding the study?  
NIHR Health Technology Assessment programme (UK)

Who is the main contact?  
Dr Kathryn Jarvis, KJarvis1@uclan.ac.uk

## Contact information

### Type(s)

Public, Scientific, Principal investigator

### Contact name

Dr Kathryn Jarvis

### ORCID ID

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5963-7346>

### Contact details

University of Central Lancashire, Brook Building Room 247  
Preston  
United Kingdom  
PR1 2HE  
+44 1772 892782  
KJarvis1@uclan.ac.uk

## Additional identifiers

### Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)

Nil known

### Integrated Research Application System (IRAS)

330807

### ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT)

Nil known

### Protocol serial number

CPMS 65108, NIHR153944

## Study information

### Scientific Title

Acceptability and usability of the Virtual Engagement Rehabilitation Assistant (VERA) for community-based neurological rehabilitation

### Acronym

VERA in the community

### Study objectives

The objectives are:

1. To identify and engage with Virtual Engagement Rehabilitation Assistant (VERA) stakeholders in a community-based setting.
2. To complete the Health Equalities Assessment Tool in collaboration with community stakeholders and undertake identified actions to promote equality of access to and use of VERA during the intervention.
3. To review, prioritise and undertake changes identified in the first VERA (inpatient setting) study to refine the VERA Intervention in preparation for the current study.
4. To utilise findings from Work streams 1 and 2 to modify the VERA Intervention for a community-based neurorehabilitation setting.
5. To implement the VERA Intervention in two community-based neurological rehabilitation services.

### **Ethics approval required**

Ethics approval required

### **Ethics approval(s)**

approved 03/12/2024, North West - Preston Research Ethics Committee (2 Redman Place, Stratford, London, E20 1JQ, United Kingdom; -; preston.rec@hra.nhs.uk), ref: 24/NW/0321

### **Study design**

Interventional non-randomised qualitative

### **Primary study design**

Interventional

### **Study type(s)**

Quality of life, Treatment

### **Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Neurological rehabilitation

### **Interventions**

Following consent, and collection of demographic information, service users will be invited to take part in the following:

1. Training to learn how to use VERA.
2. Completion of a questionnaire (approximately 10 minutes top complete) to help explore their response to this training
3. Completion of six quantitative measures before using VERA (approximately 35 minutes to complete all six questionnaires): Short-form 36 (SF-36), Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), Perceived Health Competence Scale (PHCS), Six Item Cognitive Impairment Test (6-CIT), Occupational Self-assessment-Short-form (OSA-SF), Modified Rankin Score (MRS)
4. Use of a VERA Unit for up to six weeks to use within their rehabilitation.
5. On completion of the use of VERA, an interview of up to 60 minutes, which will be conducted online, or face-to-face if this is preferred.
6. Completion of the six quantitative measures after using VERA: SF-36, PHQ-9, PHCS,6-CIT, OSA-SF, MRS.
7. Debrief

In addition, clinical staff will provide the number of goals set and completed by each participating service user during their time with a VERA Unit. Usage data will also be collected.

Staff working with the service users who have been allocated a VERA Unit will be invited to participate in the study. Up to 10 staff participants from each community neurological rehabilitation service will, following consent and collection of demographic information, will be invited to undertake the following:

1. Training to learn how to use VERA.
2. Completion of a questionnaire to help explore their response to this training
3. Contribute to a focus group of up to 90 minutes (one for each community neurological rehabilitation service). The Focus Group Discussion will be conducted face-to-face if infection control measures and research partner protocols enable face-to-face focus groups. Otherwise they will be conducted online. These groups will take place at a time and venue convenient to the staff.

## **Intervention Type**

Other

## **Primary outcome(s)**

A framework analysis (Ritchie and Spencer 1994) will be used to analyse the data collected

1. Qualitative component: Exploration of the acceptability, feasibility and usability, and information about who may gain benefit/disbenefit from VERA measured using training questionnaires, service-user interviews and the staff focus groups during the intervention
  - 1.1. Experience of receiving training to use VERA
  - 1.2. Experiences of using VERA
  - 1.3. Facilitators and barriers to using VERA
2. Qualitative component: Overall total number of minutes of VERA usage recorded at 6 weeks; Timepoint(s): Post-intervention (6 weeks)

## **Key secondary outcome(s)**

There are no secondary outcome measures

## **Completion date**

30/04/2026

# **Eligibility**

## **Key inclusion criteria**

Service user participants will be eligible for inclusion if they:

1. are receiving, or are on a waiting list to receive, rehabilitation to address the impact of a neurological condition.
2. have rehabilitation goals that a therapist identifies can be addressed through the VERA intervention.
3. have communication that supports effective use of the VERA Unit, either independently or with additional equipment/support. Where an individual has a communication impairment, this will be assessed by a speech and language therapist.
4. are able to understand written English language, or have daily access to someone to offer translation support, as VERA is currently only available in the English language.

Staff participants will be included if they:

1. are a member of the allied health professional staff, either a qualified professional or staff

working in a support role.

2. have worked in their professional capacity with service users who have been allocated a VERA Unit during the implementation phase.

**Participant type(s)**

Patient

**Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

**Age group**

Mixed

**Lower age limit**

18 years

**Upper age limit**

99 years

**Sex**

All

**Total final enrolment**

0

**Key exclusion criteria**

Service users will be excluded if they:

1. do not have mental capacity to engage in the study. This will be assessed through discussion between the service user, the clinical team and the researchers and, where permission is given, with participant-identified family and friends. This discussion will be based on the five principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice (Department for Constitutional Affairs 2007). Individuals will be provided with every support possible to consider their involvement in the study (and their subsequent use of VERA) and to make a decision based on the information provided.
2. are under 18 years of age.

Staff participants will be excluded if they:

1. spend less than seven hours a week working with service users within the community neurological rehabilitation service.
2. are under 18 years of age.

**Date of first enrolment**

21/07/2025

**Date of final enrolment**

31/03/2026

**Locations****Countries of recruitment**

United Kingdom

England

**Study participating centre**

**Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust**

Sceptre Point

Sceptre Way

Bamber Bridge

Preston

England

PR5 6AW

**Study participating centre**

**Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

Royal Liverpool University Hospital

Prescot Street

Liverpool

England

L7 8XP

## **Sponsor information**

**Organisation**

University of Central Lancashire

**ROR**

<https://ror.org/010jbqd54>

## **Funder(s)**

**Funder type**

Government

**Funder Name**

NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Co-ordinating Centre (NETSCC)

## **Results and Publications**

**Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan**

The anonymised, analysis of the interviews and focus groups during the current study will be available upon request from Kathryn Jarvis: KJarvis1@uclan.ac.uk. This analysis will be available once the Executive Summary has been published. We do not have consent from participants to share data for other research.

**IPD sharing plan summary**

Available on request

**Study outputs**

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Participant information sheet</a>	Service user version 3	14/12/2024	04/03/2025	No	Yes
<a href="#">Participant information sheet</a>	Staff version 3	14/12/2024	04/03/2025	No	Yes
<a href="#">Participant information sheet</a>	Participant information sheet version 3	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes
<a href="#">Protocol file</a>	Study website	14/12/2024	04/03/2025	No	No
<a href="#">Study website</a>		11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes