



Local Area Research + Intelligence Association

## LARIA Newsletter June 2022

### **So, what now?**

I wrote during the pandemic that the profile of research and data had rarely (if ever) been higher, or the positive impact of brilliant research, intelligence, and insight communities across public services, so widely acknowledged. On behalf of LARIA, I wanted this desperately dark period for our country and our communities, particularly those who were most vulnerable, to stimulate a radical change of thinking and action for our sector. My sentiment was that this was “our time” and as we creep slowly, but hopefully decisively out of this pandemic – we must grab the opportunities presented.

So, what does a post-pandemic future look like? As I am a visual thinker - some of you may have heard me talk or read some of my articles for the local government trade press about the notion of the pinball machine and the bungee.

Firstly then, what is this pinball machine analogy all about? My thesis is that the last two decades has been characterised by some of the deepest geo-political, economic, environmental, technological, and societal shifts ever. This must be thought of from the global, right down to the micro level, but the point is that nobody has remain unaffected by this constant, perpetual change where the ricochet (as represented by the pinball) means that making sense of what is happening is virtually impossible. We are all inside the pinball machine and just when we think we have anchored ourselves, ordered our thinking and our actions – we see further frenetic activity which could throw us off course again. The power of knowing what works, what doesn't, how context shifts everything equips us all, both individually and collectively to make more informed choices in what seems like a chaotic environment.

Secondly this metaphor of a bungee. My contention is that during the last two

years or so of the pandemic, we have all been understandably stretched to our maximum tension. This tension has resulted in innovation, disruption, and rapid, active learning loops, which have clearly delivered positive outcomes, despite (or probably because of) the pandemic situation we all faced. The key now in my view is to release some of this tension on the bungee by offloading the negative, destructive impacts created by the pandemic which has tested everybody's emotional and physical wellbeing and resistance. It is simply impossible and unnecessary to remain at this heightened sense of anxiety and preparedness. But we must retain the positive tension brought about by new ways of working that I reflected upon in my last article; random acts of kindness throughout our communities; ingenuity and a resilience and capacity that has proven to be quite extraordinary. It is seductive, and in fact hard wired into us as human beings and the complex systems that we all exist within, to allow all the tension and resistance in the bungee to go. This of course means the bungee returns to its original state. We have all heard frequent reference to recovery from the pandemic, but that means we go back to where we were pre-pandemic. For me that place was not good enough in terms of the prevailing structural inequalities (which have worsened because of Covid) or the way in which we failed to put our communities at the heart of our decision-making and delivery.

So, I have called for a re-imagination of public services in this context. Here remains the greatest opportunity for the potency of evidence-based policy and practice to ensure wherever possible that this opportunity for a total re-set is not missed.

**Professor Martin Reeves**

**Honorary President, LARIA**

**Chief Executive, Coventry City Council**

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**LARIA Council**

**Paul Holme, LARIA Council Member and Head of Performance, Research and Intelligence, Manchester City Council**

***When strategic, service and insight leads come together to focus on Performance Management we can achieve great things!***

It is important that as a Research and Intelligence community we celebrate and promote the role we play in service improvement. That is why I offered to write this short piece to illustrate how data, analytics and data storytelling in Manchester has played a significant role in our recent 'Good' judgement by Ofsted.

Performance reporting and the culture of performance management in Manchester's Children's Services has developed significantly since an "Inadequate" Ofsted judgement in 2014. At that time, the main performance management framework consisted of just 13 high level measures and a significant focus on Looked After Children. The output was a static Excel spreadsheet, which took an analyst two weeks every month to prepare, and whilst it was presented at performance meetings, the discussion often focused on data issues and gaps, rather than performance management itself.

Fast forward 8 years and analysts have developed a comprehensive performance management framework covering 56 key indicators across the whole of Children's Services, supported a focus on individual service areas and their managers. In total over 300 performance measures are available and tailored to different audiences. Managers access the reports directly and dashboards allow managers to start at a high/city-wide level and then filter down into the detail they need to understand the patterns.

Our Director of Children's Services led a push for service managers to access reports themselves. We've provided training sessions on the reports and have spent time ensuring users understand the performance reporting. Both leading to managers having a much greater understanding of their own data so they can manage their services in an evidence-based manner.

*'What is the Data Telling Us'* conversations now take place quarterly at Children's Services Performance Clinics. Each quarter analysts review the latest Performance Management Framework and associated data to identify areas of concern, emerging issues and good performance. In the recent inspection this key issue analysis alongside the regular reporting provided senior leadership and service managers with the clear insight they needed so they could communicate with clarity and confidence when responding quickly to key lines of enquiry (KLOE) raised from inspectors.

In addition, internal evaluation focused on new delivery models and deep dive analysis for cohorts such as Children on CiN Plans also enabled us to demonstrate to inspectors that we know our children well and have robust mechanisms in place to adjust/adapt services, inform commissioning, capture the story behind the data as well as evidence outcomes and impact for children and young people in Manchester.

So, whilst service improvement is always lead and delivered by the service and they deserve every bit of the appreciation for the amazing job they have done to improve services to Children in Manchester, without the support of data specialists, coders, analysts and researchers, they may not have been able to respond to issues or target improvements as accurately. A lesson you should all hold onto!

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### **Rachel Robinson, Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council**

Yesterday was a momentous day for Wigan's Joint Intelligence Unit; our first in-person away day in over 2 years! A chance to connect and catch-up with old colleagues and meet new team members, but importantly an opportunity to celebrate our achievements and reflect on the seismic shift in the reach of and attitudes to intelligence over the last few tumultuous years.

As in common with many local authorities, the pandemic accelerated the transformation of our use of data in Wigan; requiring us to implement at pace our

emerging data warehouse so that we could connect vulnerability indicators and proactively reach out to our most vulnerable residents; spurring on our use of automated datasets through PowerBI, so we could provide front line teams with up to date management intelligence on the local testing position and trialling the use of new business intelligence tools, so that we could provide cutting edge analytical products.

It was however the cultural shift that has really acted as a watershed moment in the use of data, from reaching a new audience of residents keen to devour our weekly Covid updates, to staff teams using data in new ways to inform operational and strategic decision making and tell their story.

To the future, we continue to build on the momentum gained in the last few years and aim to use this as a springboard to further transformation. Challenges remain, not least recruitment difficulties across the Analyst sector, but opportunities there are aplenty including a workforce keen to embrace intelligence, a willingness to explore the sharing of data across partners (in ethically and legally compliant ways), and digital developments driving innovation in the use of business intelligence tools. I think it's a bright period for our sector!

## LARIA Updates

### **LARIA Spring Webinar Series 2022**

Thank you to all our presenters and attendees for making our recent webinar series such a success. Diverse and thought-provoking presentations were followed by really insightful answers to a range of questions and comments from attendees. You can view the webinar recordings and download the presentations in the [Members' Area](#) on the LARIA website, located in the Past Events section titled 'Spring Webinar Series'. If you have difficulty logging in to the Members' Area please contact [admin@laria.org.uk](mailto:admin@laria.org.uk)

Here's a quick summary from the webinars.

CACI presented how CACI developed a tool to understand the cost of living at a local level by using four inputs. It was interesting to see how different Acorn groups have been impacted by the cost of living and the different spending patterns for each group. When looking at the impact of interventions, the CACI tool showed how the recent gas and electricity rebate to households for the energy crisis could affect the Acorn groups. After the presentation there was an interesting discussion about the wider cost of living crisis and impacts of changes to Universal Credit, the living wage and income taxes and concerns about use of food banks and food insecurity.

Essex County Council shared its research on survivors of domestic abuse and how they worked closely with local partners to engage with diverse cohorts. It demonstrated the importance of providing choice to participants in terms of ways to share their views. The project highlighted the importance of working collaboratively, sense checking, using a suitable tone and not using a 'one size fits all' approach. It also highlighted the importance of researcher wellbeing, and the value of being part of a community of practice group with peers from other local authorities.

Sheffield Hallam University and Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council shared how Doncaster is working with Sheffield Hallam University to improve research capacity and appreciation with Doncaster. They shared the challenges facing local government research working with academics, and suggestions on how to improve relationships. Discussion after the presentation touched on shared research sites/hubs, how different local authorities engage with universities (both formally and informally), the development of a policy ecosystem, and how embedding researchers helps local authorities and universities.

We heard three fascinating and informative presentations with lessons for working with data, both quantitative, particularly in making use of Business Intelligence tools, and qualitative. We heard, including through an excellent live demo, how Tableau in Oxfordshire County Council, and Power BI in Data Cymru, can be used by anyone to combine data and provide powerful insights, as well as some of the

pitfalls and challenges to look out for when adopting these. We also heard Mace & Menter and Bristol City Council about the potential of video to undertake and communicate research in a way that can grab attention and influence action, especially amongst decision makers.

Essex County Council shared its first in-house foray into digital ethnography. It was really interesting to hear what Essex learnt from the experience and how the knowledge was shared with the council's colleagues. Delegates were provided with a range of tool and tips to take away and apply in their own organisations.

Glasgow City Council and the University of Glasgow showcased the fascinating area of mobile phone data and the ways in which it being used by local policy makers. The collaboration was a great example of a council and university working together, to meet a range of analytical challenges that the local area was facing. This included providing a better understanding of the changes happening as people move around the city region and to use this to drive economic recovery policy.

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## News

### **LGA - How 'data mature' is your council?**

How well does your council use data for decision-making?

The Local Government Association (LGA) wants to partner with councils to trial the use of a data maturity self-

assessment tool during 2022, and your council can take part too. It's inviting councils at any stage of maturity from 'data unaware' to 'data masters' to take part in the trial. The self-assessment tool is easy-to-use and takes no more than 10 to 15 minutes to complete. By participating, you will be able to:



- track where your council is in its data journey
- plan your next steps towards data maturity
- compare your council against other councils and across different service areas

- encourage conversation on the data needs of your council
- work collectively to raise standards and to improve cultural and work practices.

Find out more about the LGA's [data maturity trial](#) or email [transparency@local.gov.uk](mailto:transparency@local.gov.uk) to take part.

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## GeoPlace

### Linking People to Places

Last month's GeoPlace annual conference explored a wide range of society's most relevant themes, examining the need for the precise location information that sits at the heart of public services.



Every service provider needs to make a connection between people and places. Whether that's helping people in fuel poverty, understanding energy use, lighting the highways, repairing potholes and having bins collected, supporting vulnerable people (particularly important as the pandemic settles but has not ceased to be a concern), connecting to superfast broadband and 5G, voting, or paying council tax.

Speakers at the conference looked at the impact of joined-up systems behind the scenes, and how data linking provides insights and enables analysis for the effective delivery of public services.

All of the [video presentations are on the GeoPlace website](#), together with a written summary of each session. Please click on the sessions below for more information.

- [Safer, more secure homes and buildings](#)
- [Stronger British infrastructure](#)
- [Warmer, more sustainable homes and buildings](#)
- [Improving the property chain](#)
- [Your data, supporting local public services](#)

- [Using UPRNs and USRNs to integrate data in your authority](#)
- [From planning to maintenance to demolition, the lifecycle of address and street data](#)

Please do particularly review the '[Your data, supporting public services](#)' session which featured Claire Holloway, Head of Corporate Services and Dr Catherine Howe, Chief Executive, Adur & Worthing Councils discussing why geospatial information is a powerful tool to understand and deliver 'place based' services.

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### **Census results are on the way**



On 28 June 2022, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) will publish the first results from Census 2021.

The first results will include five datasets containing population and household estimates for England and Wales, at local authority level.

The ONS will also publish two statistical bulletins and a report on quality and methods. Further details can be found on the [first results release page](#) of the website (please scroll down).

Details of later releases can be viewed on the [proposed outputs and release plans pages](#).

[Read our blog](#) where Jen Woolford, Director of Health, Population and Methods Transformation, explains what you can expect from the first results and how ONS has reached this stage.

For promotional assets please visit the [downloadable resources page](#) of the census website.

### **Population statistics and sources guide**

The Office for National Statistics recently published a comparison of the different types of population estimates that are planned for or published in 2022 and early 2023. This includes information about whether these are official estimates of the population or used only for wider research, as well as the sources, coverage and

main uses and comparability issues for the estimate.

Read the full article at [Population and Statistics Sources Guide - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Sexual orientation, UK: 2020**

On 25 May, the ONS Centre for Ageing and Demography released [Sexual Orientation, UK: 2020](#). This release is based on the Annual Population Survey (APS).

Data on sexual orientation in the UK by region, sex, age, marital or legal partnership status, ethnic group and socio-economic classification are now available to [download](#).

### **Crime survey for England and Wales - redesign consultation**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Centre for Crime and Justice (CCJ) have recently launched a consultation on the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

Estimates from the CSEW are used by policy makers, the police, academics and many other interested parties on a range of topics covering crime and the criminal justice system in England and Wales. However, we now need to review how well the CSEW meets the needs of the people and organisations using the survey.

This consultation will give users an opportunity to influence the content of the survey and planned methodological changes.

We would very much welcome your feedback to help us determine the best way forward for the CSEW.

Please respond to the consultation at [Office for National Statistics - Citizen Space \(ons.gov.uk\)](#).

The consultation closes at midnight on Sunday 21 August 2022.

If you have any questions about the consultation, please email us at [CrimeStatistics@ons.gov.uk](mailto:CrimeStatistics@ons.gov.uk).

### **Tracking the price of the lowest-cost grocery items, UK, experimental analysis: April 2021 to April 2022**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has recently published an analysis of how the prices of the lowest-cost grocery items for 30 everyday products have changed since April 2021.

You can find the full experimental analysis at [Tracking the price of the lowest-cost grocery items, UK, experimental analysis - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/articles/economy/price-indexes/2021-04-01-tracking-the-price-of-the-lowest-cost-grocery-items-uk-experimental-analysis)

## **Labour Force Survey - Still time to share your views on our transformation plans**

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) has, for many years, been the cornerstone of ONS statistics on UK employment. While now complemented by other, often faster sources of information like real-time PAYE data, it remains the richest source of data on many aspects of the world of work and wider society. Darren Morgan, Director of Economic Statistics Production and Analysis, discusses the challenges this survey faced during the pandemic and how we now plan to transform it.

There is still time to tell us how you feel about the changes. [Read the blog - Making everybody count: How we're transforming the Labour Force Survey](#)

The blog contains a link to a survey where you can give us your views on what impacts users might have and what the ONS can do to support you through the changes. **The deadline for this survey is 29 June 2022.**

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## **Courses, Training Events and Webinars**

**NIHR Policy Research Unit in Health and Social Care Workforce**



### **A Lifestyle Choice? Mental Capacity and Multiple Exclusion Homelessness**

Wednesday 6 July 2022, 2 – 3.30pm, online

We are delighted to invite you to this webinar by social worker and Approved Mental Health Professional, Lizzie Furber, senior practitioner in the East London

NHS Foundation Trust Rough Sleepers Mental Health Project (RAMHP).

This seminar will consider the notion of 'lifestyle choice' in relation to people experiencing Multiple Exclusion Homelessness (MEH) and explore the practical application of the MCA, including assessing executive capacity. The aim is to increase practitioner confidence in working with a population group often deemed 'too complex'.

[Register](#)

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## Jobs

To submit a job advert to appear in the newsletter or on the LARIA website, please download and complete this [form](#) (Full Corporate and Corporate Members only). You can also post Job Vacancies on the Jobs Board in the LARIA [Members' Area](#).

The next newsletter submission deadline is [Thursday 21st July](#).

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### **Coventry & Warwickshire BI roles**

Are you an experienced Business Intelligence (BI) analyst looking for their next step? If so, then these roles could be for you!

NHS Coventry and Warwickshire CCG are seeking applications from passionate BI analysts for two exciting opportunities in our BI Team. You will be joining the team at an exciting time as we transition to an Integrated Care System (ICS) and will play a key role in developing analytics across Coventry and Warwickshire.

For more information please see the [Job Advert](#).

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**Are you a Corporate or Full Corporate Member?**



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Your LARIA Corporate Membership entitles you to submit content to the monthly LARIA newsletter, if you have any research, events, job adverts, resources or news which you would us to include please send it to [admin@laria.org.uk](mailto:admin@laria.org.uk).

The next newsletter submission deadline is **Thursday 21st July**

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