



Local Area Research + Intelligence Association

LARIA Newsletter April 2024

LARIA Updates

Local area research in 50 years' time

LARIA is 50 years old this year, starting life as a network in 1974. Back then, the average house price was £9,000, the average salary was £1,800, a gallon of petrol cost you 50p and a loaf of bread was 14.5p. Adjusting for inflation, not everything was a bargain then, and conversely, some things are now eye-wateringly expensive.

In 1974, there was a three-day week, strikes, general elections, a recession, several large companies collapsed, local government reorganised and we were just emerging from an energy crisis. How far we've come in half a century!

In the world of local area research, our LARIA archives paint an interesting picture. Over the years LARIA has incorporated a few other groups into its fold. BURISA (British Urban and Regional Information Systems Association) is one of them and the oldest.

The first BURISA newsletter of October 1972 included an article on the Coventry management information systems with its 256k store, tape readers and disk drives. Its aim was to bring multiple files together in one place, and to provide a single source of management information. There was an article on data privacy and the need to safeguard personal information. And a comment piece criticised a published paper on local government reorganisation for not including enough on the role of computers and the information they contain in providing management information to councils.

The first LARIA newsletter was published in July 1979. It featured articles on the forthcoming 1981 Census of Population, the potential use of Teletext (Google it, if you're too young to

remember) as a channel to publish a single source of local area statistics, and Devon County Council was reviewing its decision-making processes and the data that feed them. A summary of the presentations given at a conference included 'Research and intelligence for deprivation' and called it a 'controversial research area'. Forty-five years ago, the LARIA newsletter contained a list of publications, including the addresses where interested LARIA members could write for their paper copies (some free and others with prices from 60p).

May 1984's LARIA newsletter provided information on 'micro-computers' being used by analysis teams, statistical evidence on the size and distribution of the elderly population in an area, and a review of the 1984 LARIA conference, including 'demonstrations and talks on computer software from suppliers, the first time this has been features at a LARIA conference.' Forty years ago, an article on the analysis of 'social malaise' (using indicators such as single parent families, unemployment and crime) showed increasing social polarisation and questioned what the impact would be on local services.

May 1994's LARIA newsletter included an advertisement for Windows software that would allow 'geographical interrogation of data', 'instantly cross-tabulate anything' and 'automatic profiling'. A thought piece said: "researchers need not only to raise the profile of their own contribution to public services, but also to pursue more of their work collaboratively in research networks throughout the public sector...demonstrating the value that research can add to policy making, management and service delivery." Thirty years ago, councils were also 'dipping their toes' into qualitative research, teams were providing digital mapping services, a report on the rural economy and green tourism, a report on the social renter market including the impact of overcrowding on children, community safety profiles and 'differentials in the needs of the population'.

We know that the only truly reliable thing with predictions is that they are unreliable. So I'm not going to offer any future-gazing prophecies.

But, the more things change, the more they stay the same. We now have much more power in a mobile phone than a room full of computers from the 1970s, and instant and direct connectivity to a multitude of data, information, insights, comparators and best practice. But local areas and their leaders are still wrestling with similar issues and are still asking insight teams for their expertise and input. In the future, the data sources and their availability and interoperability, analytical systems, technical skills and presentation media will change, but there will still be a role for researchers and analysts to interpret data, and use their skills to story tell and influence decision-makers. Over the next half-century, skilled local area research and intelligence people will still be massively in demand.

The other constant is that it remains critical to share our work and understand what others

are working on. We all benefit from learning throughout our careers. Which is why LARIA is still relevant today and still here to serve you. We all communicate electronically more than ever before. That said, we all know that nothing beats meeting people face-to-face to share ideas and compare notes, as we are all social animals at heart.

What impact are you creating today? Why not share your work with your LARIA peers at one of our forthcoming events? This year, our event theme is 'We are not alone: artificial intelligence and data science – friend or foe?' I wonder what our successors will think of us in 2074.

Mike Walker

Vice chair of LARIA

Senior business intelligence manager, Lancashire County Council

News

Laria

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**CALL FOR
PRESENTATIONS
#LARIA2024**

**LARIA's Webinar Series & One Day Conference and Awards
Dates and Venue to be confirmed**

We are not alone:

artificial intelligence and data science – friend or foe?

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the phrase of the moment. Whether it is through an online chatbot, social media or a smart speaker, AI is in our everyday lives. It could drive significant efficiencies in many sectors or could make employees obsolete. It could solve the world's problems or create a dystopian world where we are slaves to the machines.

AI is already being used by organisations in local areas to some degree. And those organisations are looking to their local area research and intelligence teams to inform and deliver that work.

Added to this, the opportunities presented by data science techniques, such as machine learning and predictive analytics, can underpin strategic and operational decision-making. Again, local area research and intelligence teams can be front and centre of development and implementation.

Our events aim to provide delegates with the ideas, tools, and techniques for delivering improved outcomes for the public based on robust data, evidence, and research. This year, our webinar series and conference are both themed around AI and data science.

For full details on what we're looking for and to submit a presentation please download the [submission form](#) and return to admin@laria.org.uk by Friday 10 May 2024.

Sponsorship opportunities will be available in due course.

In Partnership with

CACI

Courses, Training Events and Webinars

Connecting people and Places

Knowing *where* change is taking place, *where* houses are being built, *where* communities are developing and *where* the infrastructure needs to be built needs dependable and accurate geographic data.



At the GeoPlace annual conference which takes place [21st May at Manchester United Football Club](#), experts will share the evidence that shows how accurate UPRN and USRN data delivers significant outcomes in areas such as:

- Health – better-integrated data that's reducing costs to provide 'Healthy Homes'
- Digitising the home-moving process – more compliance, less stress, less risk, less cost, more surety
- Household energy – more-accurate analysis that accelerates the green agenda and saves money for residents
- Housing – new-builds, to nurturing connections throughout the property life-cycle
- Connectivity – building the resilient and lighting fast full-fibre networks that homes and businesses need
- Reducing congestion – improving air quality, enhancing the overall reliability and effectiveness of our highways networks, both above and underground.

As [the LGA says](#): *“The Unique Property Reference Number – the unique identifier for every addressable location – is key to almost everything that’s delivered or achieved by councils. UPRNs should be fundamental to all data matching and, therefore, to all data analysis. This would ensure that disparate data sets and innovative applications of data can be blended to provide insight and understanding about residents and businesses, which is needed to deliver area-based services effectively on the ground. Every authority has common focal points, such as housing, education, welfare and highways. When the UPRN is added to each siloed department’s data, the whole organisation benefits. It becomes a much simpler exercise to link inter-departmental information.”*

The [full agenda for the day is available here](#) and [registration here](#).

Home Care Research Forum

Please join us for the next Home Care Research Forum, organised by the NIHR Policy Research Unit in Health and Social Care Workforce, King's College London. The Forum provides an opportunity for researchers, people working in the field and others with an interest in homecare to gather and discuss current exciting research and to network with each other. This is a quarterly event held online and is free to attend.

When: Wednesday 8th May 2024

Time: 2-4pm

Where: Online (via Zoom)

How to register: Please register your place via Eventbrite: [Home Care Research Forum - 8th May 2024 Tickets, Wed 8 May 2024 at 14:00 | Eventbrite](#)

What's happening: This is a free online event. We have two exciting talks lined up...

Talk 1:

Speaker: Dr Bethany Manning (Clinical Psychologist, University of East London)

Title: "Understanding Older People's First Experiences of Home Care: How Do They Describe Receiving Home Care for the First Time?"

Summary: This talk will provide an overview of a research project that explored older people's accounts of receiving home care for the first time. The research focused on understanding what it means for older people to start receiving home care, including how this experience might influence their self-view and psychological well-being. Interviews were conducted with older individuals who had begun receiving home care in the East of England, and the transcripts were analysed to identify themes. This presentation will share the findings of this research and discuss the potential implications.

Talk 2:

Speaker: Kate Hamblin, Diane Burns, Cate Goodlad - University of Sheffield/ Sheffield University Management School

Title: 'Technology and care in the UK: Policy, storylines and practice'?

Summary: Policy discourse in the United Kingdom presents technology as a solution to challenges facing social care provision, including issues of quality and the mismatch between care workforce supply and demand. This discourse characterises technology as 'transformative', enhancing both care quality and creating efficiencies. In this seminar, we interrogate these claims using interviews with care and technology-enabled care sector stakeholders and case study data from home care providers and workers. The 'story lines' (Hajer, 1995) presented by care sector stakeholders and homecare managers converged with those of the policy discourse, emphasising technology's benefits for quality and efficiency. The case studies with home care providers however highlighted several implications for care work and organisational practice in homecare provision: the technologies observed sometimes produced additional tasks and responsibilities, undermining the efficiency and quality story lines. The experience of care providers and workers engaging with technologies in homecare warrant further investigation and greater prominence to challenge a discourse which is at times overly simplistic and optimistic.

Please contact the event organiser if you have any issues registering for the Forum:

monica.leverton@kcl.ac.uk

Webinar on Adult Social Care Statistics

Organised by RSS Official Statistics Section and Health Statistics User Group

Thursday 11 July 2024

12:00 – 14:00

The Health Statistics Users Group and the RSS Official Statistics Section are organising a webinar to discuss Adult Social Care Statistics.

Information on registration will be circulated nearer the date, and will also be posted on the Health Statistics User Group website. This website is within the Health and Social Care Category of StatsUserNet (go to www.statsusernet.org.uk to register as a user or to login).

Programme

- **Josephine Foubert, ONS** is the lead for Ageing, Disability and Social Care for the ONS. She, or a member of her team, will present on the analytical work being carried out on Adult Social Care.
- **Jason Snowden from DHSC (Department of Health and Social Care)** will present on adult social care statistics collection and publication for England.
- **Pritpal Rayat** and **Sarah Liley**, from **NHS England** will present on Adult Social Care data developments.
- **Eleanor Platt** and **Stuart Roebuck (Scottish Government)** will give a presentation about the Integrated Social Care and Health Record which was set out as part of the National Care Service in Scotland.
- **Elaine Strange, Margaret McFadden and Susan Frame (Public Health Scotland)** will present on information available in Scotland on Social Care.
- **Bethan Sherwood, Welsh Government** will present on adult social care statistics in Wales. She will also give an overview of the activities of the UKHSSG (UK Health Statistics Steering Group) Adult Social Care Theme group.
- **Adam McCamley , Senior Analyst, Liverpool City Council** will give a local perspective on adult social care statistics.

Jobs

Calling all mid-level qualies!

MEL currently has a vacancy for a Qualitative Senior Research

Executive/Research Manager. We are a full-service social research agency that is defined and driven by our social values and you would be joining a skilled and highly engaged established team to support our current period of growth. If you



are a dedicated qualitative researcher or qual-leaning mixed methods researcher with a passion for representing the views of those who seldom have a voice in the research process, we'd love to hear from you.

[Take a look at the job advert and vacancy pack on our website here.](#)

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 23rd May](#).

Are you a Corporate or Full Corporate Member?



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.

The next newsletter submission deadline is [Thursday 23rd May](#).

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