



Local Area Research + Intelligence Association

## LARIA Newsletter November 2024

### LARIA Updates

It's been a busy November for LARIA getting ready for the One Day Conference and Awards, held on Tuesday 26 November 2024. The theme was "[We are not alone: artificial intelligence and data science – friend or foe](#)". The conference featured presentations and discussion on:

- The guiding principles of AI adoption
- How AI is being adopted by the UK government
- "We're going on an adventure!" - Kirklees Council's journey with Artificial Intelligence and Data Science
- Microsoft Copilot AI – Hype or Help? – Kent County Council experience
- Artificial Intelligence – state of the sector, and the LGA support available
- How we're exploring AI work at the Office for National Statistics

For those not able to make the conference and wanting to hear an interesting perspective on AI then the episode of [The Infinite Monkey Cage – How I is AI?](#) .Might be right up your tree.

Writing this before the conference and awards, seeing the who has been shortlisted for a [LARIA impact Awards](#) just highlights the quality of the work being done by LARIA members. The categories include:

- Best use of local area research – sponsored by LGA
- Best use of data – sponsored by CACI
- Most engaging communication of local area research or analysis

- New researcher/analyst of the year

Good luck to all and thank you for sharing your research and intelligence.

Looking beyond LARIA and the UK I find the [Our World in Data](#) is an interesting site to explore and give perspective to local statistics.

LARIA in Scotland – Co-Chair: Erin R. Murray

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## Introducing LARIA Regional Representatives

[LARIA in the East of England:](#)

**Richard Potter, Independent Researcher, Analytics Cambridge.**

Email: [richard.potter@analyticscambridge.co.uk](mailto:richard.potter@analyticscambridge.co.uk)



I have travelled round the country working in Local Authorities in Scotland and Wales before coming to Cambridge (where I also spent some time in the civil service). And now I am in self-employment. The jobs have been in research and analysis or policy teams.

Sometimes I get asked what my specialism is. There are so many possible answers. There's discussing the problem: looking at what data would help, what is there. All to help see a way forward, or the place we're starting from. So maybe

it's around having an idea what data is there, what can be done with it (but what it's limitations are as well). This little piggy went to market ..

I have found it really valuable all the way to keep up with what others are doing or trying. There's so much from meeting and sharing. There are times when we might be using the same data and techniques – it's good to see we are not alone. But we might be doing something different - there is such variety. It's sharing what works and the challenges, seeing we are not alone. That's why I try to help others look out of the window.

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## News

**Funding call from NIHR RSS Specialist  
Centre for Public Health for Local  
Authority Research Practitioners (LARPs)**



**Opportunity to apply for £50,000 for 24 months to appoint a LARP.**

LARPs are dedicated to facilitating public health research and supporting the development of research governance systems and processes, enabling public health research to happen within local authorities and the communities they serve.

Successful local authorities will receive up to £50,000 per award for a period of 24 months. The award will be a contribution (typically 50% where the post is 1FTE) to the salary costs of a LARP and includes the employer's contribution to National Insurance and Superannuation.

[Find out more about this opportunity](#)

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[Our "A view of poverty" dashboard has been updated](#)

Data Cymru's "A view of poverty" [dashboard](#) has been updated.

The [dashboard](#) brings together data relating to measures of poverty across key

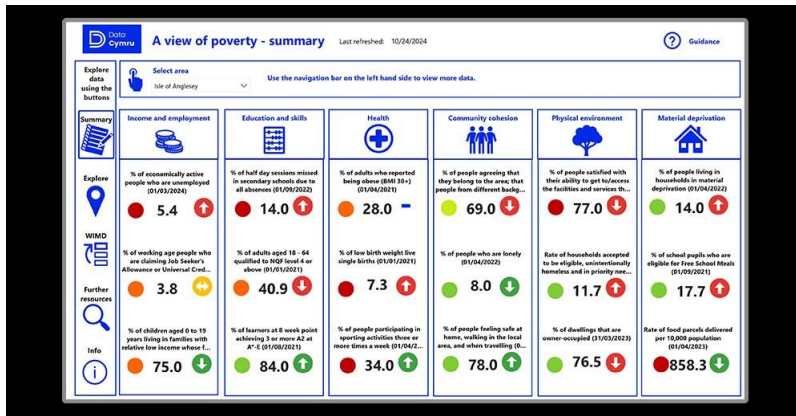


themes. It is designed to help you understand more about poverty within your local authority area.

Data Cymru have added some additional data, including:

- The 2021 census data, broken down by local authority and lower super-output area, where available. Data updates include, deprived households, qualifications by age, household tenure and household occupancy.
- Data from the Trussell Trust on food parcels and distribution centres.
- Data about families with absolute and relative low income, including those families in employment.
- OFCOM data about digital poverty.
- Additional data from the National Survey for Wales, specifically under the 'health' and 'physical environment' themes.

Take a look and explore the latest insights...



## National Resident Survey – Turning an idea into reality in six months

Understanding the views of residents is essential for effective governance. Resident surveys are an important way of gathering this feedback. However, prior to this project, all resident surveys run in Wales were unique. This made it difficult to compare results from one council to another. Data Cymru identified an opportunity to improve the consistency and comparability of these surveys by taking a 'Once for Wales' approach.

Data Cymru worked with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and local councils to develop a consistent, modular, bi-lingual resident survey that

would be offered to all local councils in Wales. The specific aims of the project were to:

- Reduce development and running costs through standardisation and centralisation;
- Enhance data quality and comparability through standardisation;
- Deliver useable insight via a results dashboard; and
- Prompt improvement conversations through comparison and benchmarking.

The project also supports the wider objective of the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA's) Improvement Team to develop sector led improvement. The National Resident Survey will help councils fulfil the Consultation Duty for their self-assessments (as per the Local Government Elections (Wales) Act 2021).

The National Resident Survey was launched in July 2024, just six months after the first discussions. In this time, Data Cymru developed the national survey, signed off data protection and sharing approaches, and created a dissemination dashboard.

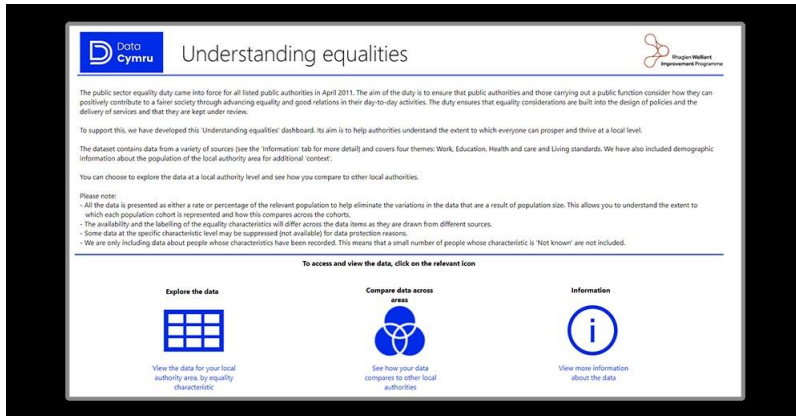
To learn more about these successes, the challenges, and what is coming next, [take a look at Data Cymru's case study](#).

### **Looking for equalities data in Wales?**

Data Cymru have published their new 'Understanding equalities' dashboard. This dashboard was inspired by the 'Is Wales Fairer?' report published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), which uses data to assess progress on equality and human rights in Wales.

The dashboard is designed to support local councils in Wales to understand to what extent everyone can prosper and thrive at a local level. It brings together equalities data, from various sources, into one place. It allows local councils to see how each population cohort is represented and compares this across different groups.

The dashboard can be accessed from their [website](#).



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## Fire and Rescue Statistics User Community

Some time ago there was a Fire and Rescue Statistics User Group (FRSUG) in which some LARIA members may have been involved. This brought together those responsible for compiling the statistics at brigade and at national level with the users in local and national government and in business, and in Third Sector organisations.

This group hasn't been active for a while but the new Strategic Data Lead at the Fire Chiefs Council, Steve Taylor, is keen to reactivate these discussions, in collaboration with producers and users of fire statistics. If any LARIA members are interested in being involved in this initiative, they can contact Steve directly. His contact details are:

Steve Taylor  
Strategic Data Lead  
DDaT (Digital Data and Technology)  
Strategy, Insight & Portfolio  
National Fire Chiefs Council

Email: [Steve.taylor@nfcc.org.uk](mailto:Steve.taylor@nfcc.org.uk)

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## Statistics Users Views on the Code of Practice for Statistics

The [Office for Statistics Regulation](#) (OSR) is refreshing the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) (the Code) to ensure it continues to meet the needs of its wide and evolving audience.

They are seeking feedback on proposals for a new edition of the Code via public consultation, which will run from 23 October 2024 until 14 February 2025.

This review is relevant for all users of statistics, not just those involved in their production. In the introduction to the consultation OSR stress that they would like to hear from a wide range of people including those who work in organisations that publish statistics and those who make use of the statistics themselves. They welcome feedback from anyone with an interest in ensuring that the proposed refreshed Code will support statistics to serve the public good.

A range of improvements have been proposed, based on comments received so far, but further comments are welcome, particularly from the wider user community who have not had yet had a chance to comment. The improvements proposed include “further prioritising meeting user needs and addressing the balance of different user needs within and outside government”.

Also, beyond changes to the Code itself, a wide range of feedback so far has emphasised the importance of finding more-effective ways to support understanding of the Code by members of the public, analysts outside of government and non-statistical staff in government, to guide their use of data and statistics. It is planned to produce more-accessible materials, from simple high-level guides to detailed material aimed at some of the most challenging current statistical issues, such as the implications of AI and the greater use of administrative data. Comments on this development are welcome.

For further information about the Code, the proposed revisions, and on how to contribute to the consultation, please [go to the website here](#).

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## Jobs

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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 12th December**.

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

The logo for Laria, consisting of the word "Laria" in a bold, teal, sans-serif font.

Local Area Research + Intelligence Association

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).

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