



Local Area Research + Intelligence Association

LARIA Newsletter March 2025

LARIA Updates

The beauty of working in a research and intelligence role in local government is the variety of projects and information a data and intelligence teams gets to work with, and importantly the impact our work can have on local residents. At Warwickshire County Council (WCC) we have a fantastic business intelligence team looking after and providing insight on data across a broad range of areas including education; adult social care; children & families; population health; waste management; economy & skills; community safety; fire & rescue; customer contact and workforce. The team also supports the organisation with performance management, consultation and engagement, data engineering, geospatial data and data science.



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A recent project has been the support to the Director of Public Health (DPH) Annual Report which has involved cross team working. Public Health and Business Intelligence colleagues wanted to focus on the power of the positive. In a time where we can feel surrounded by the media in a persistent 'permacrisis' culture, it was an opportunity to "focus on what is strong, not what is wrong." Celebrating and leveraging our existing strengths in Warwickshire.

This led to the development of the 2024 DPH report: The Power of People and Place: Celebrating and inspiring community-based wellbeing. – [see here](#). This report is a celebration of our residents and the places in Warwickshire, showcasing some examples of how communities have come together and how our natural and built environment have been utilised to promote and support good health and wellbeing.

The data used to inform the report included results of a survey carried out in May 2024 through WCCs Voice of Warwickshire Panel. This is a standing panel of just over 900 residents aged 18 and over from across Warwickshire that is co-ordinated by Business Intelligence. The survey asked open questions to ensure that residents could tell us what they liked such as “what do you value most about where you live” and “what in terms of where you live has the biggest positive impact on your health and wellbeing”. Responses were provided by just under half of panel members (n=444). Proximity to green/open spaces was a key theme for what was valued most but also recognised as having a positive impact on health and wellbeing. The results influenced the Director of Public Health’s recommendations.

Rather than a written report, the report took the format of an animated video and further brought to life by featuring voices of local residents including panel members. We are proud of the 658 views on YouTube and counting! Finally, the additional new step was taken to use a dialogue tool to allow residents and stakeholders to feedback on the final report and make suggestions.

Another area of work where the Business Intelligence team has had an impact is the development of an Integrated Reporting Hub for Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS). The hub merges and replaces several existing Power BI dashboards produced by Business Intelligence over the past 5-years to support various needs.

The Integrated Reporting Hub aims to remove duplication of reporting, streamline current reporting processes and simplify the administration and development of key dashboards. All Power BI reporting within the WFRS is either contained within or accessible via the hub, improving transparency of data whilst allowing teams control over access to their own reporting space.

And a final example of the diverse nature of the team’s work is Business intelligence’s contribution to WCC keeping abreast of developments in Artificial Intelligence and ensuring that AI tools are introduced in a safe and secure way to benefit both the organisation and residents. A project Business Intelligence is currently involved in, is a trial of Minute, a transcription and summarisation tool offered through the Incubator for Artificial Intelligence ([Minute - Projects - Incubator for Artificial Intelligence - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/minute-projects-incubator-for-artificial-intelligence)). Business Intelligence are co-ordinating this trial on behalf of WCC - gathering feedback and testing its use in a local authority setting for Government, before the tool is potentially rolled out further to other local authorities. Minute is estimated to be 7 times cheaper than other similar products on the market that do the same job.

This is a just a selection from a whole host of interesting work. Looking ahead

supporting the evidence-base for Local Government Reform and the Level 2 Devolution Deal are amongst our priorities. What's not to like about a role in research and intelligence in local government!

Sue Robinson

Business Intelligence Service Manager (Strategic Research), Warwickshire County Council

LARIA AGM 2025



The LARIA AGM 2025 will take place on Microsoft Teams at 3pm, Wednesday 14 May. All LARIA members are invited to join us for the AGM. Full LARIA members may take part in the voting and stand for election to LARIA Council. To attend, please email Katie Worman at admin@laria.org.uk for the meeting details.

Introducing LARIA Regional Representatives

[LARIA in Scotland](#) Co-Chair Nick Cassidy, Research manager, Improvement Service

Email: Nicholas.cassidy@improvementservice.org.uk



Hi - I'm Nick Cassidy and work at the Improvement Service, the improvement body for local government in Scotland, where I lead on our research work.

The Improvement Service works across so many areas of local government it's hard to mention all the different topics that our research touches on! Currently we've had a lot of focus on child poverty, which is a major focus in Scotland, as well as demographic change, and workforce planning. In all of these areas research and intelligence is so important to help us plan, to understand what's going on, and hopefully to react in an effective way.

Although I'm far from an expert, I'm really interested in the impact that AI and machine learning can have on our research projects and found the recent LARIA conference on this topic both enlightening and inspiring. I've been experimenting with AI and Natural Language Processing for qualitative data analysis and am really impressed at how useful it can be. Hopefully this is something, alongside the amazing potential in quantitative data analysis, that will continue to improve in future.

I am also one of three co-chairs of LARIA in Scotland. I think LARIA is such a powerful mechanism for learning and raising the profile and value of research within the sector. Local government, academia, and the public sector as a whole in Scotland have so many brilliant people doing excellent work with data and evidence, and there's so much we can learn from each other and across the UK.

News

Trustee Recruitment

The Scottish Policy & Research Exchange (SPRE) exists to support more equitable public



governance and positive outcomes for people and the environment in Scotland. We do this through a range of capacity strengthening activities aimed at supporting meaningful connections and learning between researchers, knowledge mobilisers, policymakers and practitioners.

We are looking to recruit 5-7 new Trustees, including a new Treasurer, in this round of recruitment. We are seeking applicants who have energy and enthusiasm for SPRE's formative development, actively contributing to creating new structures, systems, policies and culture, in line with our commitment to a [values-led intersectional praxis](#).

Key details

Compensation

Voluntary role, with relevant travel, accommodation and expenses covered
Funded training and development

Time commitment

~4 hours per month, including attendance at:
Four 2-hour Board meetings per year
An annual 2-day strategy and development retreat
A subcommittee or working group (optional)

Skills, experience and background

We are looking to recruit for skills, experience and background in the following areas:

Scottish politics and policy

Entrepreneurship and start-ups

Third sector governance

Business development and consultancy

Organisational policy development

Human resources and people matters

Experience as a Treasurer or with the financial governance of small charities

We are particularly keen to hear from those who can draw on experience of overcoming barriers and exclusions as a result of (and intersections between) their social, cultural or racial background; geographical location or institutional affiliation; career stage or disciplinary background; sexuality, gender or gender identity, disability or migration status.

[Apply here](#)

Deadline: 9am on Friday 28th March

techUK: Post Event Overview: Harnessing Data to Improve Local Public Services



On Wednesday 12th March, 10am-11am, techUK held a webinar featuring speakers from SOCITM, LGA and GeoPlace, on “Harnessing data to improve local public services”.

New guidance from GeoPlace outlines a set of [policy principles](#) that can be used to help local authorities maximise the use of address data. By adopting these principles, councils can streamline service delivery, improve communication, and enable data-driven decision-making. This webinar along with the guidance will offer actionable steps to support the effective use of address data and the UPRN.

You can watch a recording of the webinar: [Post Event Overview: Harnessing Data to Improve Local Public Services](#)

Address Data Spotlight: Fire and Rescue Service Data Interaction

Data sharing and effective partnerships go hand in hand. Ensuring that all data sources are as accurate and up to date as possible, for the benefit of all users, is at the very core of successful data sharing.

As active users of location data, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) are in a unique position. They can both use the data and also provide candidate feedback where necessary. This spotlight piece explores this interactive relationship, and the benefits for both LFRS and the local authorities in their area. [Find out more.](#)

Housing data standards

Based on a comprehensive survey of social housing providers, Housing Technology

has published a new report examining definitions, adoption, barriers, and resources for data standards. It also outlined the significant benefits of integrating UPRNs—such as enhanced data accuracy, streamlined regulatory reporting, and improved operational efficiency. [See here for more information.](#)

Health Statistics User Group – Update on Activities

A **webinar on Administrative Data and Data Linkage**, organised by Health Statistics User Group in collaboration with the RSS Official Statistics Section, was held on the 14th March 2025. The presentations have been posted on the HSUG website, and the report, Q&A, and recording of the meeting will be posted soon. The programme for this webinar is summarised below.

For accessing the webinar information, please note that there have been some changes to the platform that hosts the HSUG website. ONS have developed a new version of the StatsUserNet platform, where HSUG webinar materials and other information have previously been posted. The new platform is known as **StatsUserNetwork**, and you will need to register with the new StatsUserNetwork platform to continue to read posts and contribute.

To register, follow the link

<https://www.statsusernetwork.ons.gov.uk/>

Once on the new platform, click on 'Explore' at the top of the page and then 'Groups' to find Health and Social Care. If you have problems with this, please contact webmaster@hsug.org.uk.

Also, HSUG is planning to open up our webinar material and discussions to a wider community of health and care analysts by setting up a HSUG community on AnalystX within the FutureNHS platform. This will provide an opportunity not only for links to other analysts and networks for our current activities, but also for easier access to historical material from previous webinars, consultations and discussions. The development of this HSUG Community is well advanced and we expect this to go live soon after Easter.

If you are not familiar with FutureNHS, it is a collaboration platform empowering everyone working in health and social care to connect, share and learn across boundaries. You can find more information and register by going to <https://future.nhs.uk/>. When registering, it would be helpful if you mention that you are registering to access the HSUG community in AnalystX. If you have problems then

please contact [HSUG](#) or [Neil Barnaby](#) from the AnalystX support team who is helping us to set this up.

Programme for Webinar held on 14th April 2025

- **Administrative Data Research UK**

Emma Gordon, (ADR UK) gave a presentation on how ESRC's ADR UK (Administrative Data Research UK) programme is working with academic and government partners across the UK to transform the wealth of public sector data into research ready data assets, available for all researchers to apply to access. Emma also described how these data assets are being used to create a wealth of policy-relevant insights.

- **Data Linkage in Scotland**

David Clark, (Public Health Scotland) gave an overview of the data linkage landscape in Scotland from within the eData Research & Innovation Service (eDRIS) of Public Health Scotland, reflecting on the Medical Record Linkage System, and how eDRIS work with partner organisations such as ADR Scotland and Research Data Scotland.

- **Using Administrative Data**

Les Mayhew, (Bayes Business School, City St George's, University of London) Les gave some practical examples of using administrative data, and data matching techniques, drawing on his work with local and health authorities, central government departments and charities.

Courses, Training Events and Webinars

MSc in Social Research Methods and Statistics (FT/PT) at the University of Manchester

<http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/social-statistics/>

The MSc provides a firm grounding in advanced quantitative methods, taught within an applied framework. The programme is designed to be accessible to people without a statistical background. It includes training in: survey design, how to analyse data and how to use statistical analysis software such as R, SPSS and Stata. The MSc modules are taught with an emphasis on hands-on training in the application of methods and software. Modules include: Statistical Foundations, Introduction to Statistical Modelling,

Survey Research, Demographic Analysis, Social Network Analysis and Longitudinal Data Analysis. The MSc includes a series of pre-sessional training courses before the MSc starts. The MSc is available full-time over one year or part-time over two years.

The MSc course offers relevant and marketable skills for a career in research and is recognised for PhD training by the Economic and Social Research Council. Advanced skills in data analysis and research are at the heart of social research, policy making across government and consultancy. Graduates of the MSc are in a good position to obtain jobs in government, the academic sector, local government and within the commercial research sector. Many SRMS MSc graduates often go on to study for a PhD. See www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/subjects/social-statistics/careers-and-employability/

Social Statistics and the School of Social Sciences at the University of Manchester are home to world leading academics. <http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/research/centres/>

How to apply

[Please apply on-line here.](#)

Application Enquiries

Please email pg-soss@manchester.ac.uk

Data Cymru training courses – dates for April 2025

Data Cymru are pleased to announce that we have new dates for their upcoming training courses in April. Be quick and book now!



Getting your point across: An introduction to how to present data effectively – [2 April 2025](#)

Understanding your information: An introduction to summary statistics – [9 April 2025](#)

Data 101: an introduction to understanding and using data – [10 April 2025](#)

Hearing from citizens: An introduction to designing and running surveys – [16 April 2025](#)

Understanding and Using Performance Data – [17 April 2025](#)

Engaging with citizens: An introduction to designing and running focus groups – [23 April 2025](#)

Getting your point across: An introduction to how to present data effectively – [30 April 2025](#)

Our training courses are aimed at and free to Welsh local authority colleagues. Courses cost £50 plus VAT for non-local authority colleagues.

Our courses are intentionally introductory and are aimed at beginners.

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 29th April](#).

Are you a Corporate or Full Corporate Member?

Laria

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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.

The next newsletter submission deadline is [Thursday 29th April](#).

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