



Local Area Research + Intelligence Association

LARIA Mini Newsletter March 2026

LARIA Updates

The LARIA One Day Conference & Awards 2026 took place at the Local Government Association in London on Wednesday 25th March and was a great success! A big thank you to all attendees, speakers and exhibitors for taking part and supporting the event. An extra special thank you to LGA for hosting the event on behalf of LARIA.

Presentations of those speakers who have provided consent are now available in the [members area](#).

If you are not currently a member, you can join LARIA for as little as £20.00 per year and get access to presentations and recordings from previous conferences and webinars.

LARIA's Research Impact Awards 2026 Winners

The winners of the LARIA Research Impact Awards were announced on Wednesday 25 March during the LARIA One Day Conference 'Local Evidence Matters: Understanding Need Through Research and Data' held at the Local Government Association, London.

The LARIA Research Impact Awards are the only awards specifically designed to showcase the work of those researching local areas and recognise the impact of research at a local level and showcase the very best work of our members. We welcome entries from across the public and private sector that show the value of this work in helping public sector bodies to make better evidence based decisions.

We are delighted to announce the 2026 shortlist and winners below:

A: Best use of local area research – sponsored by LGA



To win this award the successful entrant will show how their research has led to a greater understanding of a local area or community or an issue that is locally important, and has led to evidence-based decision-making.

Winner

Kent County Council, for 'Independent three-month evaluation of the new Kent & Medway Multi-Agency Risk Assessment (MARAC) Hub model'

Highly Commended

Derbyshire County Council, for 'From data to action: tackling health inequalities in Gamesley through community-led insight'

Shortlisted

Essex County Council: Building caring communities: using resident insight, data and digital engagement to shape Essex's Caring Communities Commission

Oxfordshire County Council: Using data to tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire: community insight profiles for local impact

B: Best use of data – sponsored by CACI



To win this award the successful entrant will show how they have successfully used data to aid understanding of a local area, community or issue that has led to evidence-based decision-making within at least one public sector body. Data for the purposes of this award is defined as the use of big data, open data, business intelligence and statistical analysis.

Winner

Greater Manchester Combined Authority, for 'Ageing in Place Spatial Risk Model: An evidence-based approach to tackling inequalities in ageing'

Highly Commended

University of Liverpool, for 'The Intervention Index: Data-Driven Prioritisation of £1.58 Billion Transport Investment in Liverpool City Region'

Warwickshire County Council, for 'Business Intelligence Team – Community Safety'

Shortlisted

Oxfordshire County Council: Mapping Need, Pathways and geographic and social inequalities: A Multimethod Analysis of Children's Social Care Demand and Decision Making in Oxfordshire

C: Best use of data or research in a district council

This award is targeted at district authorities, which often have fewer resources for research and data analysis than other types of council. To win this award the successful entrant will show how they have successfully used research or data to aid understanding of a local area, community or issue, and how that led to evidence-based decision-making.

Winner

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, for 'Powering life-changing support for residents through intelligent data insight'



Highly Commended

Colchester City Council, for 'Putting children's voices at the heart of the design; Colchester Castle play park redevelopment'

Shortlisted

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council: Building an evidence base to support reorganisation in Surrey

Wyre Council: A map-based interactive dashboard that successfully informed LGR proposals in Lancashire

D: Most engaging communication of local area research or analysis

To win this award the successful entrant will show how they have successfully communicated local area research or data analysis to aid understanding of a local area, community or issue. The audience for this communication could include senior decision-makers, staff, the media and the public.

Winner

Kent County Council, for ‘Survivor Voice Ambassadors: embedding lived experience in domestic abuse policy, training and public communication’

Highly Commended

Local Government Association for their ‘LG Inform App: engaging decision-makers through clear, accessible data insights’



Shortlisted

Essex County Council: Childhood in Essex: Gen Z and Gen Alpha ‘spilling the tea’ on the everyday realities and the changing landscape of childhood in Essex
GeoPlace: Policy principles to support the effective use of address data

E: New researcher/analyst of the year

This award is given to a researcher or analyst with under five years of experience in a research field who has made an impact. This could be a person of any age, and could be based on a particular project they have led, an innovation they have pioneered or a particularly strong skill set.

Winner

Petronella Munhenzva, from Wirral Council

Highly Commended

Jessica Austin, from Norfolk County Council

Shortlisted

Matthew Davies, Wirral Council
Abi Paggett, Kent County Council



In Partnership with Conference Supported by



Courses, Training Events and Webinars

GeoPlace annual conference

The GeoPlace Conference is a for anyone looking to unlock the full potential of location information for service delivery. This year's programme combines strategic insight with practical sessions, including a keynote on data-driven public services, 30 interactive roundtables, and guidance on tools, GDPR and data sharing. With contributions from local authorities and national organisations, it's a great opportunity to learn, share experiences, and explore how location data is transforming decision-making.



[Find out more here.](#)

New event in [this series](#).

Events are free and open to all:

The Stabilisation Centre: a proposed model integrating health & homelessness

Wed 13 May 2026, 10 – 11am [Book here](#)



A reminder of the April event:

Assessing health inequalities for adults experiencing homelessness

Wed 15 Apr 2026, 10 – 11am [Book here](#)

For the first **Margaret Butterworth Care Home Forum** of 2026, we have two talks lined up on **Wednesday 29 April, 2.00pm-4.00pm** (held online):

Quality of life focused care planning in care homes

The presentation outlines collaborative work exploring care planning approaches in care homes that focus on quality of life. It discusses the development and testing of two approaches, ASCOT for Care Planning and ICECAP, as well as the creation of



care planning guides.

Nick Smith is a Research Fellow at the University of Kent and leads the NIHR National Priority Programme Wellbeing in care homes project.

FREEDEM study

The FREEDEM study explored wandering in care homes, working alongside care homes to understand what supports and prevents wandering by people with dementia. Through a review of the literature, focused ethnography and co-design workshops, resources for care homes were developed, and this presentation will discuss these free to download resources.

Alys Griffiths is a Senior Research Fellow and Bryony Waters-Harvey a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Sheffield. Their research focuses on care and support for people with dementia and MND or other long-term health conditions.

Please register on [Eventbrite](#) and we will send you a joining link closer to the date.

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 23rd April](#).

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.

Laria

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