



Local Area Research + Intelligence Association

LARIA Newsletter February 2026

LARIA Updates

Welcome to the LARIA newsletter! I'm Dr Victoria Brunsdon, a Research and Analytics Manager in Kent County Council.



Local Area Research + Intelligence Association

In this introduction, I wanted to share some thoughts on learning and development and how we have built analytical capacity while under the constraints of increasingly tight budgets in local government. Tight budgets mean we've had to be more creative and inventive in how we grow the skills of a modern analytics team.

Within our team, we've leaned into low-cost, high-impact ideas. One of the most successful has been our programme of fortnightly DataCamp bootcamps, where we work through courses together and support each other in our learning. We've also invested time in Lunch & Learns, where team members share something they've been working on or learning about. Over the past year we've covered everything from using CACI's Acorn, to introducing continuous improvement into our work, through to Statistical Process Control charts, mapping with ArcPro, project management techniques, evaluation methods, R best practice, and a session on using Copilot effectively. Finally, we've set up a Training Hub, giving the team a shared space to post, share and spot training and development opportunities - especially free ones!

As a large employer, we've also been able to make use of the 'use-it-or-lose-it' Apprenticeship Levy to enable staff to gain relevant apprenticeship qualifications at no additional cost to the council (apart from the time-commitment required).

Staying current can feel daunting, especially when juggling work pressures, project deadlines, or

(in my own case) preparing for maternity leave. It's easy to worry about being "left behind", particularly in fields that move fast. But one thing this year has taught me is that capability isn't built through big moments or big budgets - it's built through small but consistent habits.

One of the most valuable things about being part of the LARIA community is the reminder that we're not doing this work alone. Across the country, analysts are facing the same pressures: how to keep up with rapidly changing tools and techniques, how to support services with clearer, more actionable insight, and how to do all of that while navigating budget limitations. The networks and events LARIA provides are becoming increasingly essential.

So be curious, keep learning, and keep connected to your professional communities.

LARIA's One Day Conference and Awards

Wednesday 25 March 2026

LGA, London

Laria

Local Area Research + Intelligence Association

Book your place today for a chance to hear from our exceptional line-up of speakers. You can explore the full list of speakers and their [biographies here](#).

In addition, keep an eye out over the coming weeks for the announcement many of you have been waiting for — the shortlist for the LARIA Research Impact Awards 2026.

For the full programme and to register your place, please visit the [LARIA website](#).

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News

ONS User Research Recruitment



Office for
National Statistics

From time to time we undertake different types of user research such as face to face usability testing, interviews or online surveys. To ensure we take advantage of your experience in the most effective way possible please could you complete this [short survey](#).

You do not have to take part, we will simply let you know when any suitable research is taking place. For those taking part in our face to face sessions, you could receive up to £70 in vouchers. You can find out more about our research on our [blog](#).

If you have any queries about this survey please email userinsight@ons.gov.uk and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

You will be free to leave our register for user research at any point, just contact the email userinsight@ons.gov.uk. Our [data protection information](#) and [privacy information](#) can be found on our website.

Performance management case studies

The LGA has published a range of new [case studies](#) from councils, which highlight notable practice in performance management and are packed full of inspiration and practical tips.



Designing and implementing a successful data strategy in local government, 27 January 2026

If you missed our webinar on data strategies, the recording is now [live for you to watch](#). How to develop a data strategy, the value of developing a strategy and how to land organisational buy-in. Including speakers from Essex County Council and North Yorkshire Council.

Proving the case for better addressing

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council worked with GeoPlace to quantify the financial value of high-quality address data.



By strengthening its Local Land and Property Gazetteer and using UPRNs to link datasets across services, the council was able to demonstrate clear, cashable savings. The analysis identified potential efficiencies of up to 5% in social care, 10% in waste services, and 10% in school transport through better routing, improved eligibility checks and reduced duplication.

The project provided robust financial evidence to senior leaders, securing buy-in for continued investment in address data and demonstrating that accurate, authoritative data delivers measurable returns as well as better services for residents.

[Read more here.](#)

Courses, Training Events and Webinars

There's a new event in [this series](#); events are free and open to all.

Assessing health inequalities for adults experiencing homelessness

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

A reminder of March's event:

Use and misuse: Mental capacity, homelessness & multiple disadvantage

Wed 25 Mar 2026, 10 – 11.30am [Book here](#)



We provide access to a wide range of social science data for reuse. To help you get the most from these resources, we run a free introductory training series every spring and autumn to introduce different aspects of the UK Data Service.



UK Data Service

Our training series workshops in spring 2026 are listed below and you can also [browse our training and events pages](#) for a full list of what is available.

- [UK Data Service essentials: Introduction, finding and accessing data](#), 17 March, 10.00 - 11.30
- [Introduction to effective and practical research data management](#), 19 March, 10.00 – 11.30
- [Dissertation projects: Introduction to secondary analysis for qualitative and quantitative data](#), 24 March, 10.00-11.30
- [How to become a computational Social Scientist](#), 15 April, 10.00 – 11.30
- [Introduction to copyright](#), 16 April, 10.00 – 11.30
- [Ethical and legal guidelines in data sharing](#), 23 April, 10.00 – 11.30
- [Role of Informed Consent in Ethical Data Collection, Sharing and Reuse](#), 30 April, 10.00 – 11.30
- [Introduction to anonymisation techniques for social sciences research data](#), 7 May, 10.00 – 11.30

- [Getting started with secondary analysis](#), 11 May, 10.00 – 11.30
- [Best practices for documenting social sciences research data](#), 20 May, 10.00 – 11.30

Upcoming webinar: The best kept secret in local government: Unlocking revenue with location data – 18 March 2026 14:00-15:30

Join our upcoming webinar to explore how linking address and street data across services can uncover missed revenue, speed up repayments, and improve cross-department efficiency. Rachel Antcliffe from Leeds City Council will outline the value of unique property and address identifiers and how integrated systems enhance accuracy in Council Tax and Business Rates.



Steven Harris and Laura Loughrey from Surrey Heath District Council will share their experience improving coordination between revenues and benefits, including identifying missing revenue and reducing delays. The session will conclude with a Q&A featuring all presenters and representatives from GeoPlace.

The webinar takes place on Wednesday 18 March 2026, 2:00pm-3:30pm. [Register here](#).

Jobs

Organisation: Reigate & Banstead Borough Council

Job Title: GIS Analyst & Administrator

Job Location: Reigate, Surrey / hybrid (remote working)

Salary: £35,820 to £45,909

Contract Type: Full time, permanent

Work Location: Various office locations within Surrey

Hours: 36 hour



Job Description: This role forms part of the corporate Data & Insight team at Reigate & Banstead Borough Council. You'll take part in discovery work, innovative analysis and insight generation on high-profile projects within an energetic, experimental and responsible environment.

Primarily employed by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council, this role also involves working across Mole Valley and Reigate & Banstead Councils to provide, maintain and develop geospatial services and support users within both organisations.

The diversity of skills and expertise within the team (inc data science and social research) will provide you with opportunities to collaborate, explore innovative new possibilities and realise professional development aspirations. There will be scope to work beyond traditional constraints of larger organisations and to immerse yourself in rewarding work that delivers immediate and tangible benefits to both organisations, Surrey residents and businesses.

Application Deadline: 27 February 2026

Contact for any queries: robert.steele@reigate-banstead.gov.uk, 01737 276 212

Other Information: Job share with Mole Valley District Council (2 days per week).

All details available on Jobs Go Public: [reigate Jobs | Jobs Go Public](#)

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 26th March](#).

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.

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