

LARC2: Integrated Children's Services and the CAF Process

This report contains the collective findings of the 24 authorities involved in the Local Authority Research Consortium (LARC) project.

The project uses the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) as a proxy to explore the effective integration between targeted and universal services, looking at outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Key findings

The CAF process can be a key mechanism for enhancing and embedding integrated working and can lead to improved Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes for the children and young people involved. It is seen as a single, neutral and universally used system that is not 'owned' by one sector or service.

Better outcomes are being achieved, including improvements in school attendance, engagement and aspirations, in physical health and self-confidence, in family relationships and in housing and financial support.

The Local Authority Research Consortium (LARC), established in 2007, supports Children's Services authorities in using and conducting research to evaluate progress, inform practice, share findings and make recommendations locally and nationally

Most participating authorities were clear that the LARC process had successfully encouraged reflection and learning and would result in real improvements. Five key success factors were identified for the CAF process:

- engaging children, young people and families as equal partners in the process,
- developing a better understanding of children and young people's needs, ensuring consistency of the lead professional's support,
- ensuring multi-agency working and information sharing, and
- integrating all the elements of the process.

The full report is available from
http://www.nfer.ac.uk/emie/detail.asp?id_content=207&id_category=277&id_Ref=7700&level=1&detail=news

Children's services Annual Data Conference 2 March 2010

The Children's Services Annual Data Conference "Data: Making the case for children and young people in the next decade" was well-attended and the plenary sessions and workshops provided opportunities for lively debate and discussion.

The conference programme and the presentations are available at <https://member.lgiu.org.uk/csn/confrep/Pages/020310.aspx>

One of the items on the agenda was the PIRGE survey, undertaken with local authorities on current availability and use of data to support children's services.

PIRGE - Performance Information Reference Group in Education and Children's Services was established in February 2004 to improve the use of data at all levels in children's services through establishing a representative group to:

- *Map the provision of data and information*
- *Identify how data is/could be used*
- *Identify gaps in support to the end users*
- *Ensure better communication between the partners/stakeholders*
- *Recommend to the partners how gaps might best be filled*

Tania Townsend and David Henderson are SSRG reps on PIRGE

Jasmine Ali produced a summary of some of the key points emerging from survey. The purpose of the survey was to show how and where we can improve and join up our information; what we are doing effectively; what's stopping data matching?; sharing information and local authority strategic management

The full report will be made available later in the year.