

Report by **Si Chun Lam** and **Alice Munro**, December 2005.

Raise Awareness

Promote LARCI services

"LARCI needs to significantly promote the value of its work to local authority stakeholders."

"LARCI can better communicate its services by updating all LARCI publicity materials – including newsletters, flyers, websites – in a way and language that promotes and convincingly 'sells' LARCI services to local authorities."

Liaise with local authority organisations

"LARCI is uniquely placed to facilitate links between Research Councils and local authorities. LARCI Research Council Steering Group members have a responsibility to ensure relevant information is disseminated through the LARCI newsletter and website."

"LARCI must make use of its networks with the LGA/IDeA/LARIA; Steering Group representatives from these bodies must actively promote LARCI through channels accessed by local authority stakeholders, including its publications, events and websites – such as info4local, Idea Knowledge, LGAnet's "What's New" and LARIA News."

Target senior management

"LARCI should target individuals working in senior management in order to have an influence on policy."

Improve Communications

Monitor local authority media:

"The LARCI newsletter reflects the style wanted by local authorities. However, LARCI Steering Group members have a responsibility to ensure the newsletter's content is relevant to current local authority needs by monitoring relevant channels."

"The LARCI Steering Group's ODPM representative (and other Steering Group members when liaising with government bodies) must ensure LARCI's activities are continuously relevant to the current government agenda, as topical and thematic issues of interest to local authorities are closely aligned with the government's current initiatives."

"Opinions and suggestions should be canvassed from these respondents during the course of creating the new business plan and when preparing seminars and choosing speakers."

"The LARCI Steering Group should consider commissioning writers to produce a case study of a successful LARCI-supported collaboration in journals read by local authority staff."

Build credibility through professional networks

"LARCI should liaise with both government and professional bodies to ensure its information is credible and reaches appropriate people."

Offer email alerts

"LARCI should share/supply information through brief email alerts with signposts to further information or contacts on a monthly basis."

Facilitate Engagement

Act as a research conduit

"LARCI can enhance its position by acting as a conduit to facilitate collaboration, by capitalising on the expertise of Research Council-funded centres and programmes."

Create an interactive website

"The LARCI website should be significantly revamped with an information depository and customisable alerts to facilitate collaboration and provide online forums for sharing best practice."

"Collaboration can be inexpensively facilitated through online means."

Offer affordable, collaborative seminars

"LARCI should consider charging a nominal rate of £100-200 to raise the perceived value of its seminars and to cover seminar costs to enable limited staffing and financial resources to be used more effectively. In addition, seminars should continue to include speakers and audiences from as wide a range as possible to facilitate really useful 'working in partnership' and networking between academia and local authorities."



Local Authority Research Council Initiative

LARCI – bringing local authorities and the Research Councils into closer partnership, leading to better informed research and better informed policy. www.larci.org.uk



Local Authority Research Council Initiative

LOCAL AUTHORITY SURVEY REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT WE DID

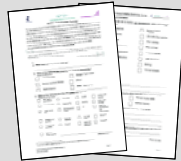
The objectives of this survey were to:

- Inform the new business plan
- Respond to research users' needs
- Gauge awareness and perceptions
- Raise awareness amongst local authorities
- Understand access/use of ideas and information
- See how LARCI fits in with Research Council goals

WHAT WE FOUND OUT

- 39% knew about LARCI beforehand but most were both unaware of LARCI's objectives and hence unable to offer their perceptions.
- Respondents accessed ideas and information through LGA/IDeA/LARIA publications and other websites; and received policy guidance from government through the ODPM and are members of a huge range of professional organisations.
- Authorities frequently collaborate with both academics and consultants due to their expertise and specialist knowledge. However, consultants provide a much broader range of collaboration while academics tend to facilitate socio-economic studies.
- People frequently work with LGA/IDeA/LARIA but rarely contact Research Councils.
- Council interests are closely aligned with government agenda. Seminars that facilitate discussion and partnership working are preferred, and most respondents are willing to pay £100-200.
- Respondents were highly interested knowing more about LARCI: It was strongly felt LARCI needs to publicise its own work more; and 60% wanted to join the newsletter.

The questionnaire reached...



2699 unique contacts
post – email – telephone

By the deadline, we received...

278 responses
10% response rate



WHAT'S NEXT?

LARCI should...

- Raise **A**wareness
- Improve **C**ommunications
- Facilitate **E**ngagement

