



# LARC

Local Authorities Research Consortium

## Integrated children's services and the CAF process (LARC2)

Excellence and Evidence – Making the Difference  
Conferences June 2010



research in practice



# The research questions

**Does the CAF process support the achievement of better outcomes for children and young people?**

**What are the key factors that promote the effectiveness of CAF in different contexts?**



# LA questions

## Children's Trust arrangements (11)

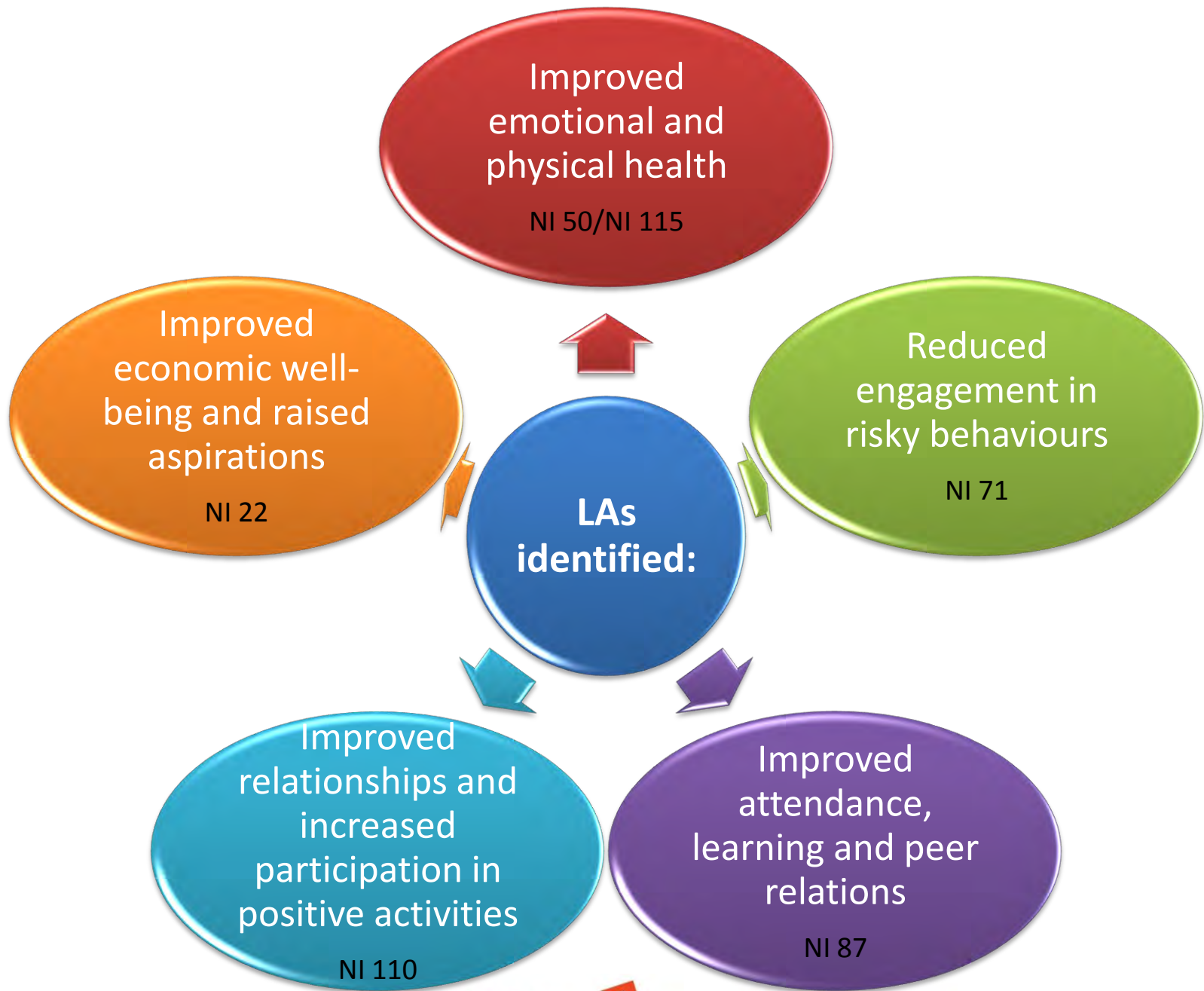
- Early years (2)
- Non-attenders (2)
- CYP at risk of negative outcomes (7)

## Lead professional role (7)

- Early years (0)
- Non-attenders (4)
- CYP at risk of negative outcomes (3)

## Engaging CYP and families (6)

- Early years (2)
- Non-attenders (1)
- CYP at risk of negative outcomes (3)





# The impacts of the research on practice

Taking forward the learning from the research into existing training programmes

Developing a thorough and consistent understanding of the lead professional role

Sharing findings locally to ensure CAF is embedded

Creating user participation groups of children, young people and parents/carers

Starting to use the CAF to support the transition to secondary school

Using CAF more strategically to target specific groups of children and families

Improved outcomes for children, young people and families

Increasing the amount of early intervention and prevention work

Embedding the CAF process

# The CAF was most effective when:



there was a holistic understanding and regular review of the needs of the child and the family, with agreed action plans and targeted support



the lead professional was appropriately skilled, empowered and had a positive relationship with the family



there was shared accountability between all of the services (including schools) as well as good and timely information sharing



there was professional, practitioner and family engagement with the process, with the full involvement of the young person

# Challenges for the CAF process

Reliant on family engagement

Time, resource and capacity

Lack of consistency of approach and support

Varying degrees of priority accorded to the CAF from different agencies

Confusion re threshold levels for different service engagement in supporting the young people.

# Challenges for the Lead Professional

The role sometimes caused worry and anxiety and was seen as burdensome

- Need for appropriate formal and informal support

Working with other agencies

- Need for full engagement in the process

Lead professionals not always certain what support was available for families.

- Need for clarity re thresholds

# What does the LARC 2 research tell us about integrated working?

**The CAF process appears to have:**

supported better coordination of services and joint working to improve the outcomes for children, young people and families

improved commitment to early intervention and prevention across multi-agency groups

improved understanding and appreciation the roles, remits and support offered by different services.

Progress is clearly being made in engaging agencies in joint work – but more needs to be done

# Recommendations

- Link CAF data and strategic planning
- Promote consistent messages esp. to universal services
- Promote use of national guidance
- Promote shared accountability across agencies
- Review referral procedures locally to complement CAF process
- Training & support to lead CAF episodes
- Use pre-CAF
- Share good practice locally
- Explore longer term impact of CAF process on children, young people and families

Are the success factors and challenges here similar in your Trust?

What have you found effective in overcoming the challenges?

What are the implications of these findings for investigating cost/cost effectiveness of integrated working for LARC3?



LARC Local Authorities Research Consortium



research in practice

I&DeA

Improvement and Development Agency

Local Government Association



For further details about the findings,  
please contact:

**W:** [www.larc-research.org.uk](http://www.larc-research.org.uk)

**E:** [larc@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:larc@nfer.ac.uk)

**T:** 01753 523 156

For further information about  
**LARC3**, please contact Jane Lewis:

[Jane@rip.org.uk](mailto:Jane@rip.org.uk)

