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BUILDING A SAFE, JUST
AND TOLERANT SOCIETY

The British Crime Survey - the UK experience of measuring victimisation

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The British Crime Survey

- **Measures crime victimisation rates, experience of crime and public attitudes among adults living in private households in England and Wales**
- **One adult aged 16+ per household**
- **Multi-stage random probability sample**
- **Postcode sectors, addresses**

BCS data collection

- **Face to face interview in the home**
- **Data entry on to laptop**
- **Self completion section (CASI)**
 - **Drugs (awareness and usage)**
 - **Drinking behaviour**
 - **Domestic violence and sexual assault**

BCS history

- **Started in 1982 then conducted every two years till 2000**
- **2001:**
 - **Continuous fieldwork introduced**
 - **Sample size increased**
 - **Reference period changed**
 - **Calibration weighting introduced**

Main drivers of current methodology

- **To provide data for performance management**
- **To maintain a consistent time series**
- **To maintain alignment with police recorded crime**

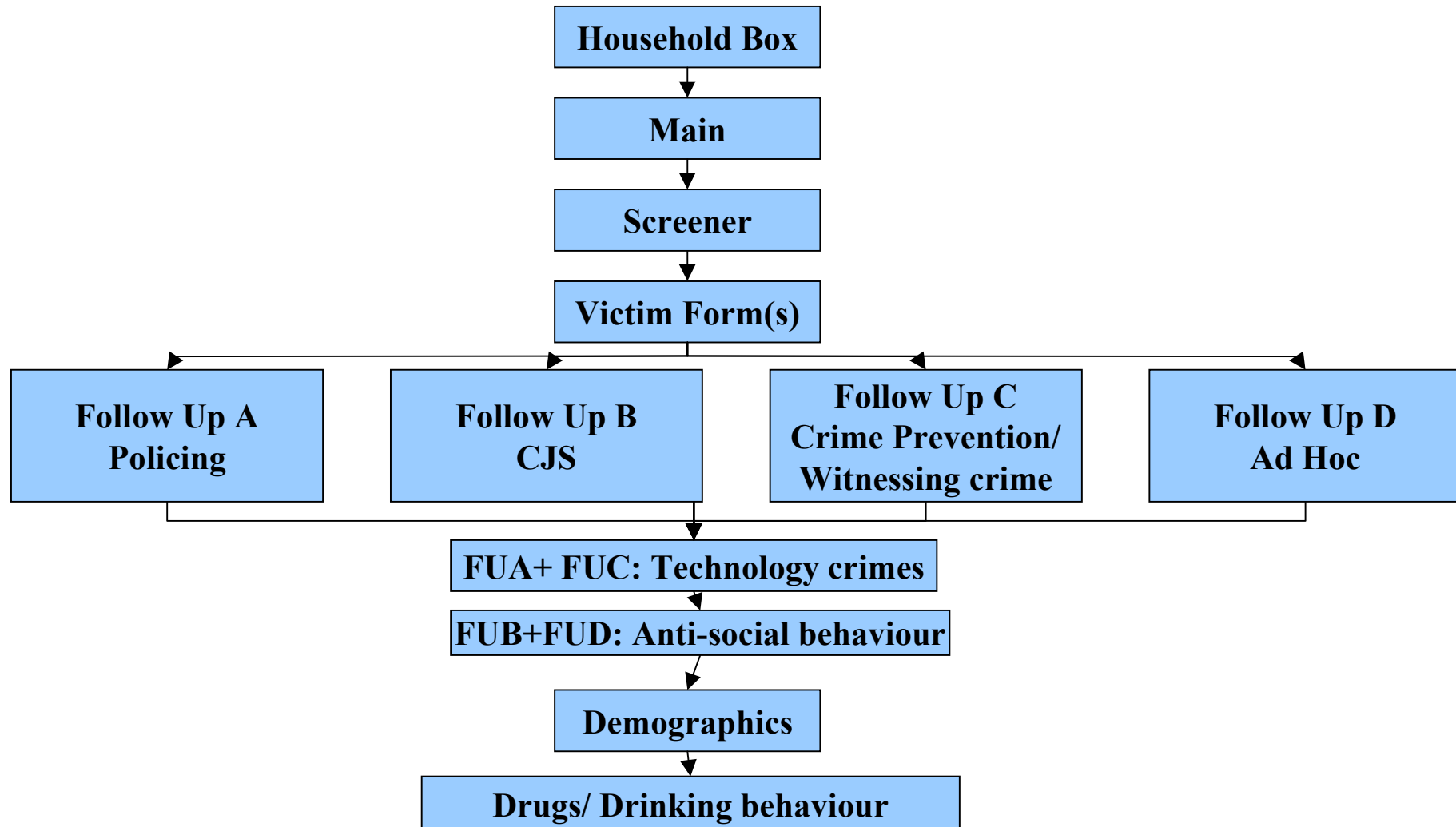
Main points to consider today

- **Sample design**
- **Data collection with reference to victimisation**
- **Comparison with police recorded crime**
- **Reference period**

Cost effective sample design

- **Representative of 2 linked populations**
- **Stratified**
- **Rotating primary sample units**
- **Disproportionate sampling**
 - **Police Force Area**
 - **Young people 16-24**
 - **Ethnic minority boost**

Structure of 2003/4 British Crime Survey Questionnaire



Victimisation screener questions

- **Asked of whole sample**
- **Designed to capture everything irrespective of reporting or respondent's own definitions**
- **'Labelling' not important at this stage**
- **Designed to avoid double counting**
- **Use of calendar**

Victim forms

- **Asked for each offence identified at screener stage – maximum 6 forms**
- **Verbatim – precoded questions – recap verbatim**
- **Coded by specialist coders and random checks by HO researchers**
- **Coding frame designed to reflect police recorded crime. Consistent since beginning of survey**
- **But BCS can add information**
 - **eg violence against the person – divide into domestic violence, stranger violence etc**

Comparison with police recorded crime

Important because:

- **Need to assess any differences in trends**
- **Used for analysis of reporting and recording by the police**
- **Used for modelling**
- **Now used in target measuring**

Create comparable subset of crimes

- **Comparable subset includes offence covered by both BCS and police recorded crime**
- **Main BCS statistics exclude:**
 - ‘Victimless crimes (eg drug dealing)
 - Murder
 - Fraud
 - Sexual offences (small number/disclosure)
- **Adjustments made to estimate for victims under 16 and commercial targets**
- **Comparable reference periods**

Reference period for victimisation

- **New performance management culture required robust measures**
 - at sub-national level (for 43 police force areas)
 - on a regular annual basis
- **Prior to 2001, fieldwork in the first 3 months of the year on victimisation relating to the preceding calendar year**
- **Now uses continuous sampling throughout the year**
- **The recall period is now the 12 months prior to interview**

The future

- **Data processing review**
- **Need for small area data**
- **Consider under 16's**
- **Consider commercial victimisation**