

## **Crime Survey User Conference, December 2017**

### **Summary notes from the panel session: 'How will we measure crime in 10 years'**

#### **Background**

Since the data environment is changing and we are becoming increasingly digital, questions emerge as to how we will measure crime and use data in the future. For instance, since the Home Office data hub now includes details of victim demographics as part of police recorded crime, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is no longer the only source of data to answer questions about who are the victims of crime.

#### **Reflections on the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)**

- The CSEW originated because administrative police records did not record all crimes. This is still the case and therefore administrative resources alone are insufficient.
- Additionally, before the CSEW there was no source combining data on attitudes, perceptions and experiences of crime and the criminal justice system. Without the CSEW, we would have very limited data on victimisation and knowledge of important issues such as multiple victimisation. Research using the CSEW has been used to inform crime reduction initiatives.
- The CSEW has always evolved, for instance moving from paper to laptops, revisions to the questionnaire and the introduction of self-completion questionnaires. We can expect it to change in the future.
- CSEW data could be better exploited if more criminologists had quantitative skills.

#### **Data collection challenges and problems**

- There are several challenges to obtaining the high response rates needed by the CSEW. For instance, more people are living in flats where access for interviewers is more difficult. Crime is also changing with growing online fraud and cybercrime. New CSEW questions have been developed.
- A major strength of the CSEW is the time-series data. Any changes to the methodology (such as moving to web-based systems) could risk losing this asset. ONS recognise that changes would need a long-run period (with different methods running in parallel).
- Ten years into the future could be too far to think about given the speed of technological change. Technological developments around surveillance could change the types of crime and the data available.

#### **How to join up sources of data?**

- There are (surprisingly) few links between different administrative records relating to crime. However, there is the potential for change as the ONS is investing in secure environments, the Digital Economy act will give ONS the right to request data and there is technology to make data linkages.
- The quality of administrative/police records is variable with particular issues around missing data and changes in recording practices.

- If data comes from (multiple) administrative resources, would future access for researchers be guaranteed?

#### **Move the CSEW or data collection online?**

- A major obstacle to moving data collection online is the lack of a sampling framework. As a result, the most viable option is to contact via post and send a unique reference number for completing the survey online. However, response rates when using this method are typically very low.
- It is important to consider if a move could risk missing the left-behind, who are also vulnerable to crime.

#### **Should we not have a more ambitious vision?**

- In addition to considering how to make use of administrative resource and online data collections, a more ambitious vision could be to consider the potential to follow victims over time or how to better align with data collection in other countries.