

British Crime Survey: options for extending the coverage to children and people living in communal establishments

Kevin Pickering, Patten Smith, Caroline Bryson and Christine Farmer
National Centre for Social Research and Ipsos MORI

This report presents findings from methodological research carried out to examine the feasibility of covering children (under 16s) and people living in communal establishments as part of the British Crime Survey (BCS) or as separate surveys. The main aim of the research was to outline options for obtaining nationally representative estimates of crimes against these groups.

Children

- The research has concluded that including a sample of children in the BCS would be feasible and that this should be done by including children aged 10-15 identified in the households selected for the core BCS. Interviews should only be attempted in households where an interview with the main adult was achieved.
- There are two approaches that could be used to obtain information from these children: a mix of CAPI, CASI and audio-CASI or a paper questionnaire. The decision depends on the balance between costs and quality/flexibility. If the higher quality computer interviewing is used, then the number of children selected in each household should be limited to one. If a paper questionnaire is used, then more than one child in a household could be included.
- Information from the children should not be combined with the core BCS data – the two should be analysed

separately. Therefore, questions for the child sample could be specifically written for that age range.

Communal establishments

- The research also concluded that it would not be feasible to cover communal establishment residents in the BCS in a statistically reliable manner without incurring very substantial additional costs. If a decision were made to cover this population, a properly resourced feasibility study would be essential.
- Because lists of communal establishment residents do not exist, it would be necessary to draw a sample of institutions first. Communal establishments might be sampled either from the Postcode Address File (PAF) or directly from lists of types of communal establishments e.g. lists of educational institutions or care homes.
- The PAF does not identify communal establishments and identifying a useable sample would require considerable address screening, which would be time-consuming and costly.
- Available lists of communal establishments are insufficiently comprehensive to form the basis of a full sample frame, although it might prove feasible to construct a frame covering some populations, in particular institutions for students, nurses and older people.

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Keywords

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