



# Getting started using the CLS birth cohorts Webinar

29 November 2022

Centre for Longitudinal Studies, UCL Social Research Institute

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LONGITUDINAL  
STUDIES



Economic  
and Social  
Research Council

# Today's schedule

Session	Time	Topics covered	Speaker
1.	13.00 – 13.15	Introduction	Dr Vanessa Moulton Senior Research Associate
2.	13.15 – 13.35	Content by 'subject area'	Dr Morag Henderson Associate Professor in Sociology
3.	13.35 – 13.55	Overview of the type of analysis	Dr Richard Silverwood Associate Professor
4.	13.55 – 14.20	Getting started with the data And where to go for more information	Dr Vanessa Moulton Senior Research Associate
5.	14.20 – 14.30	General Q&A	All

# Birth cohort studies

- Cohort studies are a type of *longitudinal study*—an approach that follows participants over a period of time (often many years)
- Participants share a common characteristic, i.e. birth cohorts follow individuals born in a particular period - a day, week, month, year
- It follows these people throughout their lives, and collects information from them at particular ages
- During the period of follow-up, some of the cohort will be exposed to a specific risk factor or characteristic; by measuring outcomes over a period of time, it is then possible to explore the impact of this variable

## The life course approach – life stages



Preconception  
and pregnancy



Infancy and  
early years (0 to 5)



Childhood and  
adolescence (5 to 24)



Working age  
and adults (16 to 64)



Older people

# The UK's Longitudinal Studies

## TIMELINE

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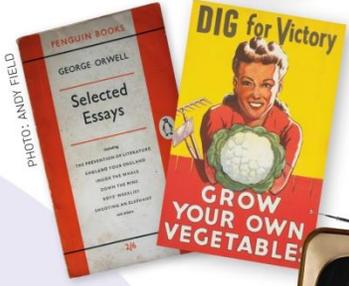
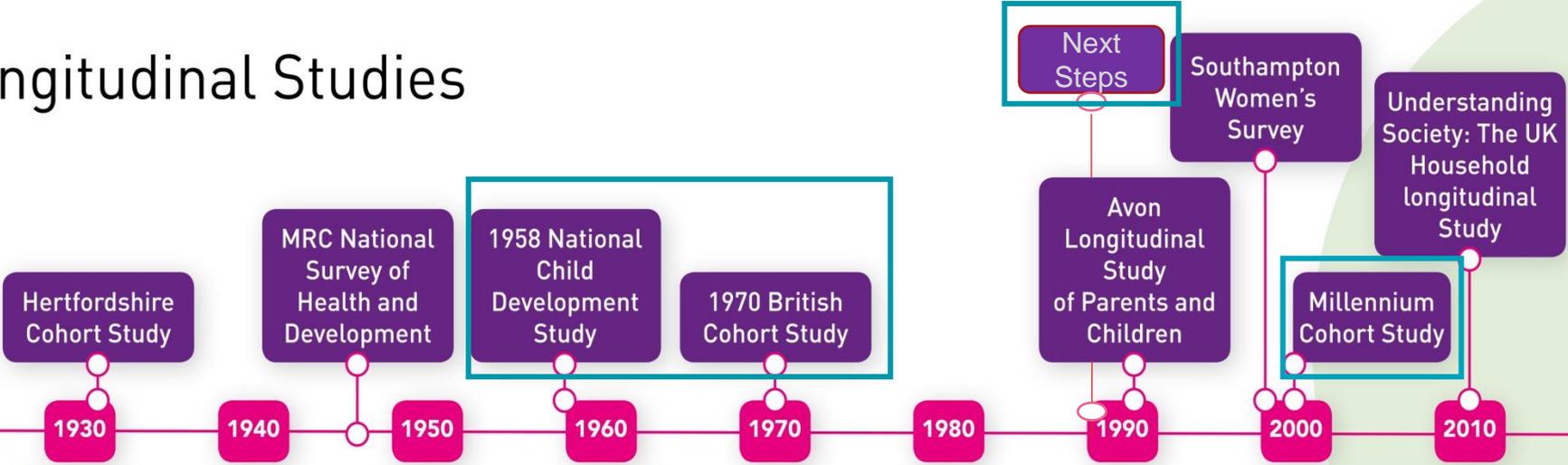


PHOTO: NATIONAAL ARCHIEF



## Early Life Cohort Feasibility Study

- A two-year ESRC funded project which started in April 2021 that will test the feasibility of a new UK-wide birth cohort study

## Children of the 2020s Study

- A new nationally representative birth cohort study of babies in England which has been commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE)
- Will answer important scientific and policy questions regarding the family, early education and childcare determinants of early school success
- Will include babies born April - June 2021, and seeks to recruit over 8,500 families in mid 2022

## COVID Social Mobility and Opportunities (COSMO) study

- The study began in 2021 with a representative sample of young people in Year 11 (15/16 yrs) across England
- Will investigate the educational and employment inequalities brought about by the COVID-19 crisis
- UKRI funded, led by researchers from the UCL Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities and the Sutton Trust, in collaboration with CLS

# Four national longitudinal studies

1958 National Child Development Study (NCDS)

born in GB in one week. N = 17,415

1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70)

born in GB in one week. N = 17,196

Next Steps (formerly LSYPE)

living in England born in 1989/90.  
Began aged 13-14. N = 15,770

Millennium Cohort Study (MCS)

born in the UK in  
2000-02. N = 18,818

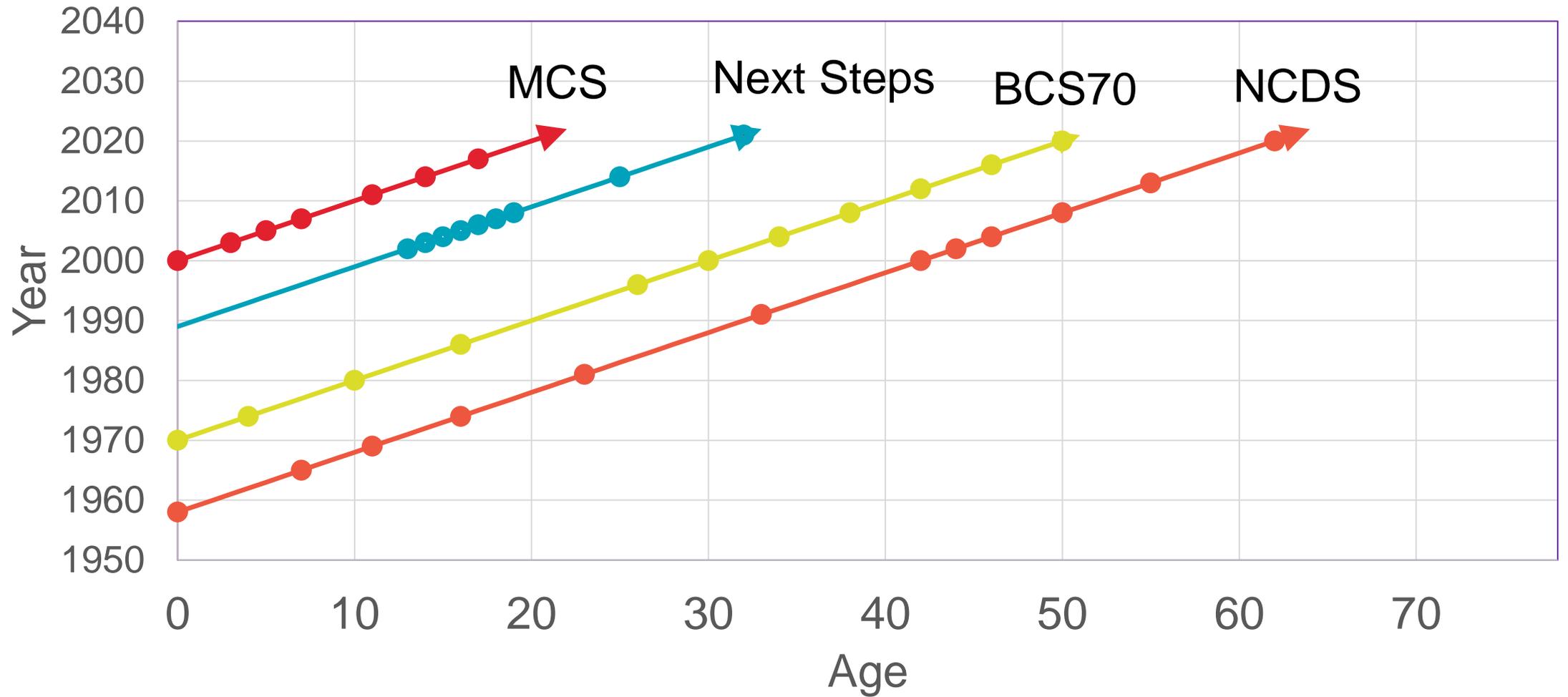
1960

1980

2000

2020 →

# Study timelines





# Example: Overview of MCS respondent & type of data

	9m	3	5	7	11	14	17
							
Both resident Parents	Interview and questionnaire self-completion (resident parents)	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Questionnaire self-completion				x	x	x
	Physical measurements		x	x	x	x	x
Cohort member	Cognitive assessments		x	x	x	x	x
	Activity monitor				x	x	
	Time use record					x	
	Saliva for DNA & genotyping						x

Also: consent to link administrative health records (to age 14); education records (to age 16); parents' economic records

Joshi & Fitzsimons (2016). Study profile: The UK Millennium Cohort Study: the making of a multipurpose resource for social science and policy in the UK. *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies*, 7, 409-430.

Connelly & Platt. (2014) Cohort Profile: UK Millennium Cohort Study (MCS). *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 43(6), 1719-1725.

# Other data enhancements in the birth cohorts

- Genetic data in the NCDS and MCS
  - MCS - Trios (cohort, mother, father)
- Linked administrative data
  - Health and education
  - Consent: Employment (all) and crime (Next Steps, MCS)
- Geographical data
  - e.g. electoral wards, output areas, Points of Interest etc
- Harmonised datasets across the cohorts
  - Socio-economic, BMI, mental health, child environment
- COVID-19 online surveys
  - Possible impacts of pandemic on multiple aspects of life
  - Wide range of topics including family, employment, home schooling, mental health during lockdown and an open question on affects of the pandemic

# COVID-19 surveys

Wave	Dates	Context	Mode
Wave 1	May 2020	First national lockdown	Web
Wave 2	Sept/Oct 2020	Eased restrictions	Web
Wave 3	Feb/Mar 2021	Third national lockdown	Web → Telephone

Study	Age in 2020
MCS	19
Next Steps	30
BCS70	50
NCDS	62

## Serology Survey:

- Participants who took part in one of three COVID-19 Surveys were invited to provide a finger-prick blood sample
- Two antibody tests conducted - N-assay and S-assay