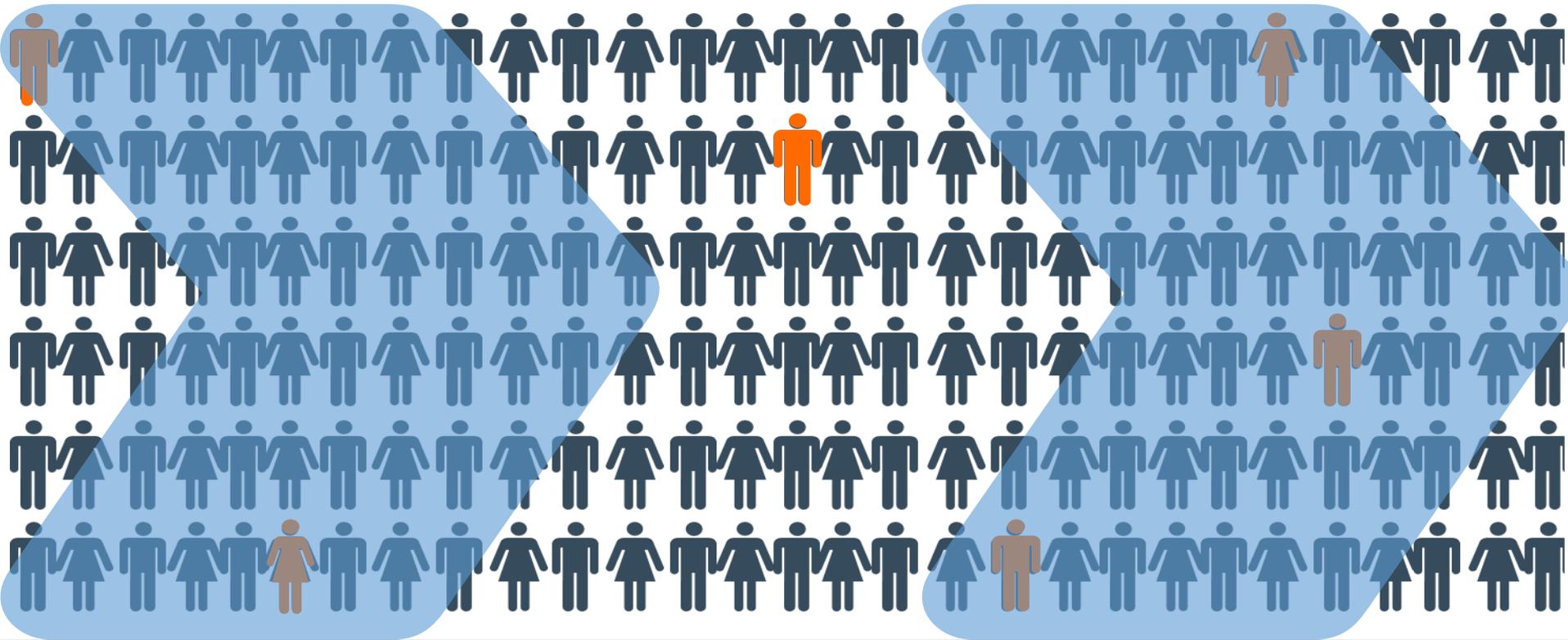




# The clients' perspective

How do research commissioners view their options?



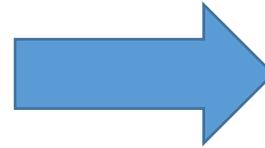


# Random probability surveys are now used less frequently in Government

Declining response rates for random probability surveys

Rising costs of many random probability surveys

Perception that there is less difference in quality between random probability and quota sample surveys



Increased use of quota sampling in government for policy related research

Pressures on budgets

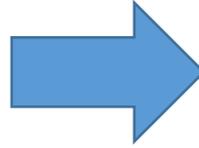
Need for survey results quickly



# GSR are thinking about the implications of this

## Need for:

- Consistency in the use of non-probability sampling methods
- Those involved in commissioning to understand the value and shortcomings of alternative approaches



Small team of social researchers and statisticians have been working to produce guidance for analysts commissioners around when to use quota sampling

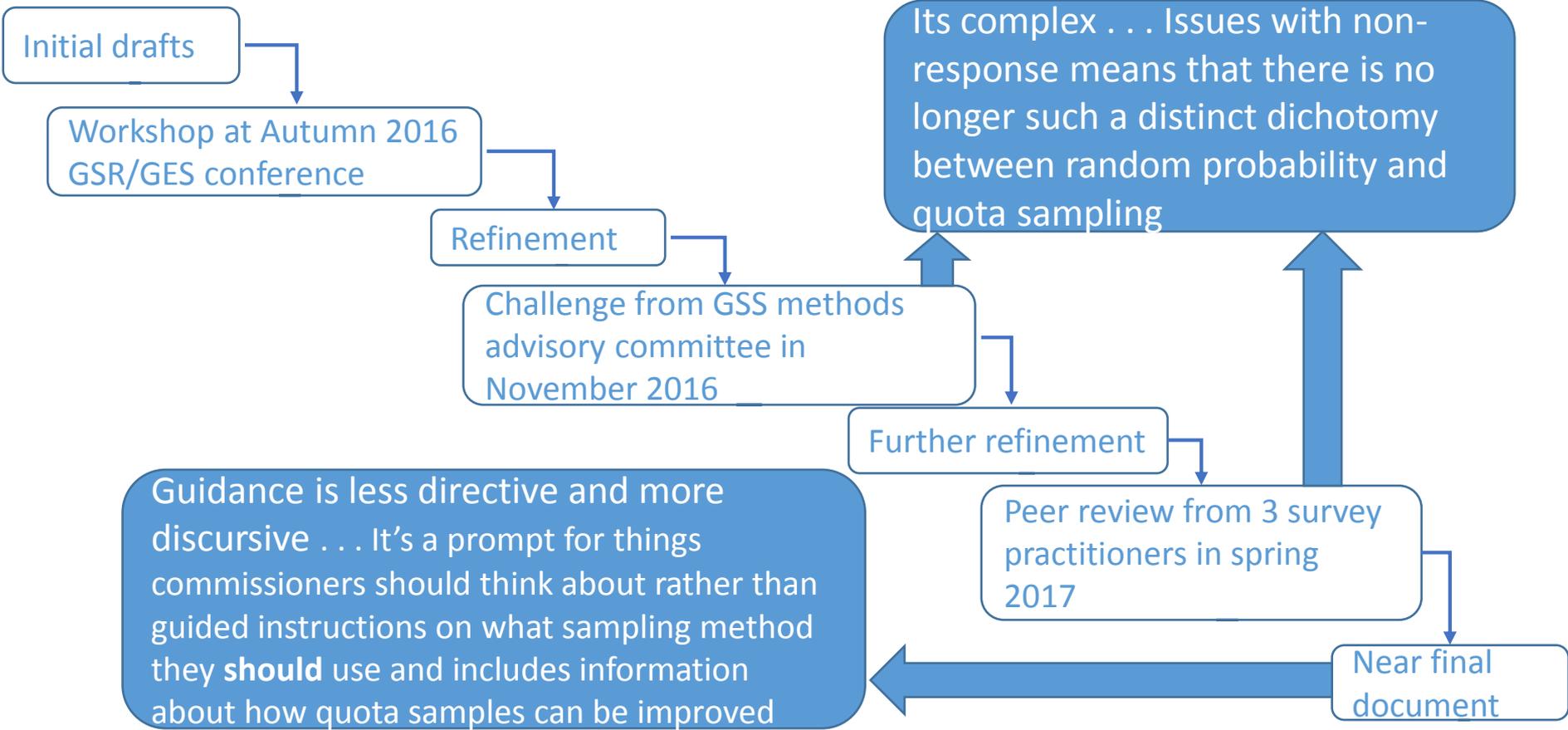
Our original aim was to develop a GSR position on quota sampling: when and how might it be appropriate to use non-probability sampling methods, such as quota sampling?

*Done in the context of opinion polling and the inability of the polls to predict election results being linked to issues with quota sampling*





# GSR collaborated with others and sought advice from experts to shape the guidance





# Overview of the guidance

- ▶ Aims somewhat refined . . . It now seeks
  - ▶ To help readers understand when they can use quota sampling, its potential benefits and limitations.
  - ▶ To give practical guidance on improving the quality of quota sampling when this is commissioned or carried out.
- ▶ GSR plan to publish the guidance in such a way as to allow users to comment on it
- ▶ Key sections in the guidance:
  - ▶ Why are we writing this guidance?
  - ▶ What is quota sampling and what is random probability sampling?
  - ▶ What are the alternatives to quota sampling?
  - ▶ **When can I use quota sampling?**
  - ▶ **Practical tips for improving your quota sampling**

It emphasises that  
“random probability  
sampling should be the  
default method we  
aspire to”

Though non-response  
issues can make these  
methods less robust that  
is not a reason to  
abandon these  
approaches, particularly  
*as random probability  
design remains more  
defensible*



## The Guidance sets out “4 golden questions” commissioners should consider asking in any decisions about sampling

1. How am I going to use my results?
2. Do I need to draw precise conclusions about the wider population?
3. Are there technical reasons why I cannot conduct a random probability sample?
4. How much scope do I have for conducting a good quality quota sample?

The Guidance will also acknowledge that the **amount of time** you have and the **budget available** are important considerations





# The Guidance sets out practical tips for improving quota samples and how results from quota surveys are reported

## Boosting the quality of a quota sample design

- Consider the selection of the sample source
  - Using a good quality random sample can reduce selection bias; if the sample must be convenience consider selecting it from multiple sources
- Set appropriate quotas
  - Take care over what characteristics to use for quotas; use of interlocking/inter-related quotas
- Be wary of simple post-stratification
  - Build variables likely to influence what you are researching into your quota design from the outset, rather than trying to adjust via post-stratification techniques. If you need to post-stratify, do this by all the variables that may influence the findings (so not just by gender for example)
- Improve survey procedures
  - Such as through quality of interviewer recruitment and training; monitoring of interviewers to ensure use of refusal conversion; requiring minimum numbers of call-back attempts and gathering information on refusals to assess sample representativeness

## Improving reporting of findings from quota samples

- Make the quota sampling approach transparent
  - Provide information on e.g. people's willingness to take part in the survey, differences between survey participants and non-participants with respect to the research topic; how well the sample matches the population
- Use appropriate language to report the results
  - We should not oversell what quota samples can do and particular care is needed to avoid making generalisations to the wider population or when comparing sub groups or over time



- ▶ As with all reporting, it should be in the past tense
- ▶ More care should be taken around making inferences to the general population through emphasising that findings referred to people surveyed

60 per cent of women surveyed owned a car

Rather than

60 per cent of women own a car

- ▶ Only reporting 'statistically significant' differences between sub groups or over time and confidence intervals with care since these strictly do not apply to quota samples