

# SAI-RTC<sup>©</sup>

Self Administered Interview  
for Road Traffic Collisions



## SAI-RTC<sup>©</sup> FIELD TRIAL

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Summary of Findings  
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This research has been funded by:



## Executive Summary

**Witnesses who completed the SAI-RTC<sup>®</sup> provided significantly more information than witnesses who completed the standard reporting form.**

Compared to witnesses who completed the standard reporting form, witnesses who completed the **SAI-RTC<sup>®</sup>** reported more information about the people and vehicles involved, how, where, and when the incident took place, and were more likely to include information about weather, road, and visibility conditions.

Officers were generally positive but expressed concerns about length, complexity, and practicality of the **SAI-RTC<sup>®</sup>**. Witnesses found the **SAI-RTC<sup>®</sup>** easy to use, and around 60% were returned (a similar return rate to the standard reporting form).



We are implementing these results in a new programme of work that will (i) streamline and shorten the **SAI-RTC<sup>®</sup>**, and (ii) develop a digital version to enable online reporting.



## Background

**The Self-Administered Interview (SAI<sup>®</sup>) is an investigative tool that can be used to elicit comprehensive initial statements from witnesses, quickly and efficiently. It takes the form of a standardised protocol of clear instructions and questions that enable witnesses to provide their own statement.**

The Self-Administered Interview can be distributed quickly in circumstances where resources are limited and where it may take time for face-to-face interviews to take place. Such delays increase the likelihood of memory decay and distortion.

Prior research has shown that witness accounts obtained via the SAI<sup>®</sup> result in more detailed accounts than other reporting formats, and that completing the SAI<sup>®</sup> soon after an event protects

the memory of that event from forgetting and manipulation over time, leading to more detailed subsequent accounts.

The current field trial focussed on testing the effectiveness of a revised SAI<sup>®</sup> tailored to the roads policing context, the **Self-Administered Interview for Road Traffic Collisions (SAI-RTC<sup>®</sup>)**.

The roads policing context is ideal for the use of the SAI<sup>®</sup>, as witness accounts are often pivotal to the successful investigation of road traffic collisions (RTCs) investigations, yet frontline roads policing officers often lack the resources to take comprehensive accounts from witnesses. This is especially true when there are multiple witnesses at the scene.

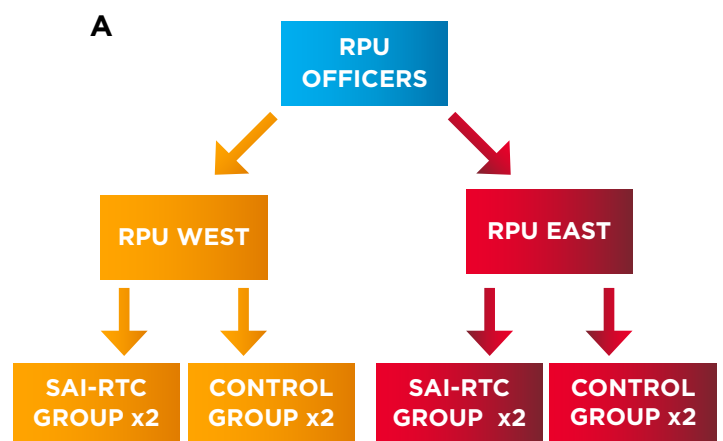






## Methods

- The **SAI-RTC**<sup>®</sup> was co-created with officers from the Road Policing Unit (RPU) within South Wales Police, who advised how the original **SAI**<sup>®</sup> might be adapted to better suit the RTC context
- The trial was conducted between 20th June 2019 and 28th February 2021
- Eight teams of RPU officers took part in the trial. Four teams took part in the **SAI-RTC**<sup>®</sup> arm of the trial, and four teams participated in the control arm, see Figure A
- Participating witnesses were adults who witnessed or were involved in a RTC that was attended by RPU officers within the trial period
- Officers administering the **SAI-RTC**<sup>®</sup> were encouraged to implement the **SAI-RTC**<sup>®</sup> at the scene. Where this was not possible, officers gave witnesses the **SAI-RTC**<sup>®</sup> at the scene to then complete at home. Where this was not possible, officers subsequently requested that the **SAI-RTC**<sup>®</sup> was posted to the witness
- Officers in the control arm continued to use standard operating procedure, where officers subsequently requested that the standard reporting form (F280) was posted out to witnesses
- Following the exclusion of witness statements that were not eligible for the trial, we analysed 276 statements, of which 58 were reported using the **SAI-RTC**<sup>®</sup> and 218 were reported using standard reporting forms



## Results

**57%** increase in overall details using the SAI-RTC<sup>®</sup> compared to a standard form

Witnesses who completed the SAI-RTC<sup>®</sup> provided significantly more detailed reports than witnesses who completed the standard reporting form. This effect was large – **an increase of about 57%** in the total number of details reported in comparison to the standard form.

## What types of detail did witnesses provide?

Compared to witnesses who completed the standard reporting form, witnesses who completed the SAI-RTC<sup>®</sup> reported more details about:

### ROAD LAYOUT

and other surrounding info

**84%**

Increase

### PEOPLE INVOLVED

in the incident

**78%**

Increase

### VEHICLES

involved in the incident

**64%**

Increase

### WHAT

people did

**64%**

Increase

### WHEN

things happened

**63%**

Increase

### WHERE

people/vehicles were in relation to each other and the road

**46%**

Increase



Witnesses who completed the SAI-RTC<sup>®</sup> were also much more likely to include the following information in their accounts than witnesses who completed the standard reporting form:

- Whether they had **discussed the incident with another person at the scene**  
**77.59% vs 56.42%**
- Whether they had **discussed the incident with another person after the incident** but before completing their statement  
**27.59% vs 5.51%**
- **Visual acuity**  
**93.1 %vs 1.38%**
- The **weather conditions** at the time of the incident  
**94.83% vs 65.14%**
- The **road conditions** (including traffic conditions) at the time of the incident  
**96.55% vs 79.36%**
- **Visibility** during the incident, e.g., lighting and obstructions  
**77.59% vs 50%**
- **Sketch** of the scene  
**93.1% vs 2.75%**

## Was the SAI<sup>®</sup> associated with different case outcomes?

- Approximately 50% of F280 cases, and 61% of **SAI-RTC<sup>®</sup>** cases proceeded to a **court prosecution**
- In approximately 23% of **SAI-RTC<sup>®</sup>** cases, and 21% of standard reporting form cases, **no further action was taken**
- In approximately 28% of standard reporting form cases and 16% of **SAI-RTC<sup>®</sup>** cases, action was taken which fell **short of a court prosecution** (e.g., a warning or driver awareness course)

However, given the relatively small number of cases in the sample (31 SAI-RTC cases; 130 standard reporting form cases), these differences may not be statistically meaningful and therefore we cannot draw any reliable conclusions from these outcome data.

## Completion rates:

- Across the duration of the trial, 102 SAI-RTCs<sup>®</sup> and 420 standard reporting forms were provided to witnesses
- **61.77%** of the SAI-RTCs<sup>®</sup> were completed and returned
- **56.19%** of the standard reporting forms were completed and returned
- The imbalance in the final sample occurred because fewer **SAI-RTC<sup>®</sup>** forms were provided to witnesses; the two types of forms were returned by witnesses at a similar rate

## Officer feedback

# 100%

of surveyed officers found the **SAI-RTC®** to produce reports that were **as detailed or more detailed** than the standard reporting form

- However, several officers indicated that the **SAI-RTC®** could be streamlined to reduce complexity and length

# 71%

of officers considered the **SAI-RTC®** to be **as useful or more useful** than the standard reporting form

- Several officers also indicated that completing the **SAI-RTC®** at the scene was often impractical, and so they tended to request that it was sent to witnesses at a later date in line with practice for the standard form

## Witness feedback

# 84%

of witnesses reported that the **SAI-RTC®** was either **very easy or quite easy** to complete

- Some witnesses found the **SAI-RTC®** to be too long

# 71%

of witnesses reported that the **SAI-RTC®** **definitely or probably helped** them remember the incident in more detail

- Many reported that they would like to have completed it sooner, and that they would have preferred an online format

## Next steps

To address officer and witness feedback, we are now:

- Streamlining the **SAI-RTC®** to reduce complexity and length
- Developing an online version that will integrate directly with police IT systems (NICHE), allowing for faster, cheaper, and more flexible administration



# SAI-RTC<sup>®</sup>

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