

Road Safety Audit

September 2021

This newsletter provides road safety auditors, designers and other road safety professionals an update on current road safety audit related issues in addition to the review of Road Safety Audit (RSA) reports.

This September edition comprises the review of RSA reports submitted to the Highways England inbox at roadsafetyaudit@highwaysengland.co.uk between April and June 2021 (inclusive).

Highways England Guide to Designing for Motorcyclists

Highways England published their Guide to Designing for Motorcyclists in April 2021. The Guide provides information on infrastructure measures that can be used to improve the safety of motorcyclists on the Strategic Road Network (SRN).

It supports design requirements and advice contained within the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) and is tailored to specifically improve highway layouts for motorcyclists.

The Guide has been produced to provide advice to designers to ensure that the issues experienced by motorcyclists are fully considered when developing highway schemes. It focuses on engineering measures to create a more intuitive and forgiving road network for motorcyclists throughout the highway scheme design process.



The Guide can be found here:

<https://highwaysengland.co.uk/industry/innovation/research/research-publications/>

What is included in this Newsletter?

- Continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on RSAs
- Update on Combined stage 1 & 2 RSAs
- Areas for development
- Good practice
- RSA process requirements
- CPD opportunities

DID YOU KNOW?

The latest update on Coronavirus (COVID-19) can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>.

Scope

This review focuses on a sample of the total number of reports uploaded to the main database during the period April to June 2021. The objectives of the review are to encourage discussion on good practice and areas that need further development.

Other focus areas for this period are the continued impact of the **COVID-19 pandemic** on road safety audit, whether **Combined Stage 1 and 2 RSAs** are being undertaken in accordance with the requirements of GG 119 and reference to **RSA process requirements**.

During this period **a total of 136 RSAs were submitted**, all of which were carried out to GG 119. The types of schemes covered by the submitted RSAs are shown in Figure 0 below.

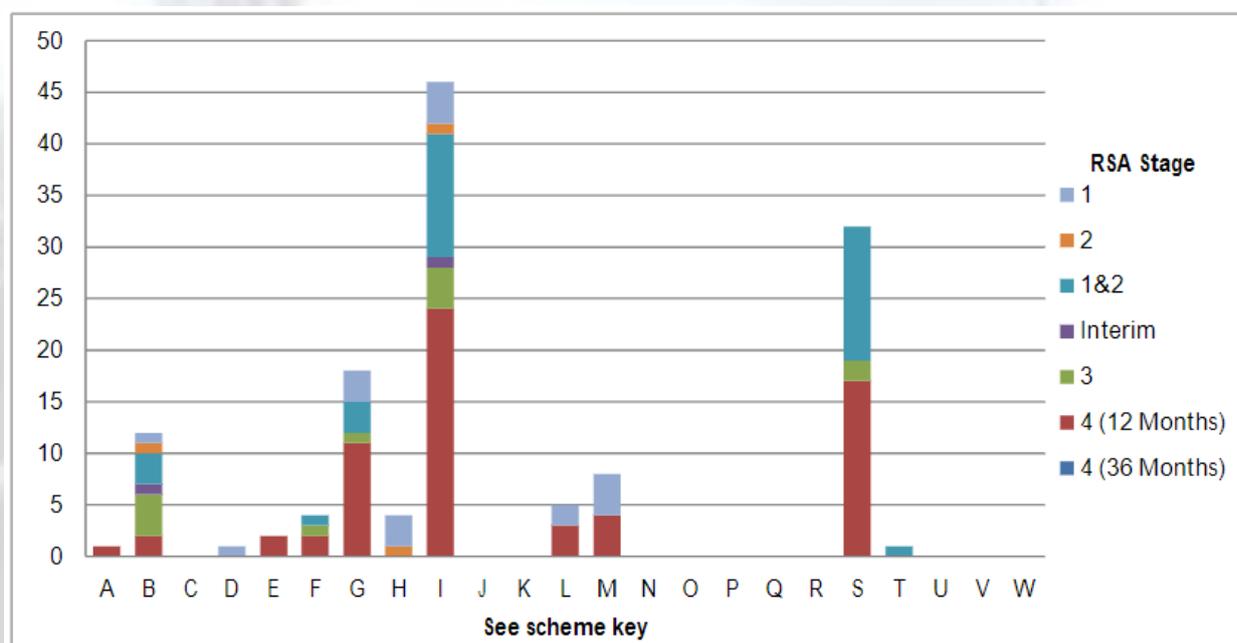


Figure 0 - RSAs by scheme type submitted during this 3-month period (April – June 2021)

Scheme Key			
A	All-Lanes-Running / Smart Motorways	M	WCHR Path / Way / Route
B	Bridge	N	Public Realm / Urban Regeneration
C	Bus Lane / Guided Bus	O	Public Transport Interchange / Hub
D	Conversion from Single to Dual Carriageway	P	Road / Access Closure or Feature / Facility Removal
E	Drainage	Q	Shared-Use (WCHRs & Traffic)
F	Enforcement Infrastructure / Cameras	R	Shared-Use (WCHRs Only)
G	Junction Improvement	S	Signs / Markings
H	Link Improvement	T	Temporary Traffic Management
I	Maintenance Infrastructure	U	Tram or LRT Route / Facility
J	Maintenance Access	V	Tunnel
K	Traffic Signals (New)	W	Widening
L	WCHR Crossing		

RSAs submitted by Highways England areas

Figure 2 below illustrates all RSAs submitted to the SR-DT inbox between 1 April 2021 and 30 June 2021 by each Highways England area.

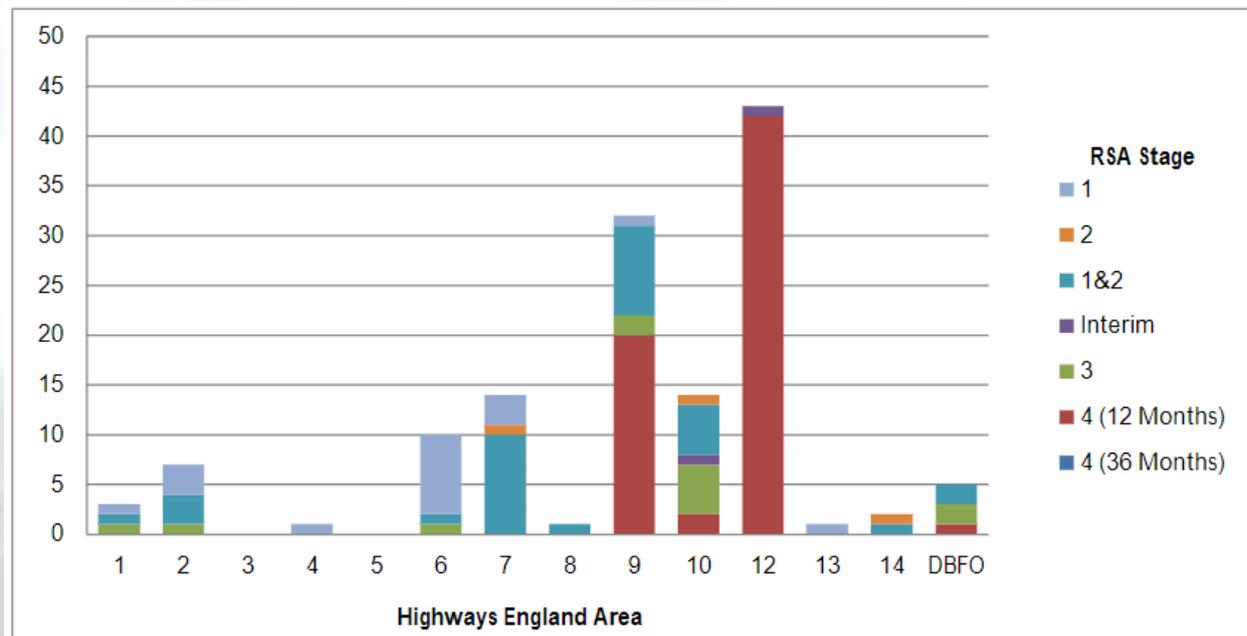


Figure 2 - RSAs submitted between 1 April 2021 and 30 June 2021 by Highways England Operational Area

43 of the RSAs submitted during this period were from Area 12 (31.6%). Of those, 42 were Stage 4 (12 month) RSAs submitted to the inbox in May 2021. Of the 42 Stage 4 (12 month) RSAs submitted, 11 (26%) were signed by the RSA team in April 2021 and 31 (74%) in May 2021. The reason for the surge in Stage 4 (12 month) RSAs being undertaken by Area 12 in May 2021 is unclear.

The sample

Of the 136 reports submitted, 30 sample reports were selected as suitable for review. The list below details the numbers of each stage of RSA forming the study sample together with totals submitted for the 3-month period.

RSA Stage	No. included in sample
Interim	0 of 2 submitted
Stage 1	15 of 19 submitted
Stage 2	0 of 3 submitted
Combined Stage 1 and 2	10 of 33 submitted
Stage 3	3 of 12 submitted
Stage 4	2 of 67 submitted

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

ROAD SAFETY AUDITS – SITE VISITS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

On the 29th March 2021, Highways England's Chief Highway Engineer revoked the relaxations to site visits for road safety audits which were introduced as a result of the national lockdown.

Please note that any schemes that have not moved beyond the design stage since the relaxations were introduced are required to have a fully compliant Stage 1 or 2 Road Safety Audit undertaken.

14 of the 30 RSAs in the sample were undertaken whilst the above-mentioned relaxations were in place between January and March 2021.

Only 2 of those were stage 3 RSAs for which the relaxations did not apply. 10 of the 14 included a site visit despite the relaxations being applicable at the time. The remaining 2 were carried out in line with the relaxations.

This shows that approximately 71% of the RSAs in the sample undertook site visits whilst the relaxations to site visits for road safety audits were in place. This is more than the 40% from the sample of RSAs submitted to the inbox during the previous period, between January and March 2021.

We will continue to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the RSA process.

Update on Combined Stage 1 and 2 RSAs

We continue to monitor the number of combined stage 1 and 2 RSAs being undertaken on the strategic road network, in order to determine how the requirements in GG 119 are being interpreted and adhered to.

33 (24%) of the RSAs submitted to the inbox during this 3-month period were combined stage 1 and stage 2 RSAs. This is only slightly more than the 23% submitted between January and March 2021.

Of the 33 combined stage 1 and 2 RSAs submitted during this period, not all appeared to satisfy the requirements for a combined RSA. Given the complexity of the schemes, they are likely to have been subject to some preliminary design, and a separate stage 1 and 2 RSA may have been more appropriate. For clarity, it is recommended that reports include a statement summarising why stages 1 and 2 have been combined.

Good Practice...

It was recommended in the January – March 2021 quarterly review that, for clarity, combined stage 1 & 2 RSA reports include a statement summarising why the stages had been combined. One of the RSAs in the sample included a statement in order to clarify this, which was helpful in understanding whether the RSA satisfied the requirements for a combined stage 1 & 2 RSA.

KEY REMINDER:

GG 119 requires that a stage 1 RSA is carried out at the completion of preliminary design. The combination of stage 1 and stage 2 RSA reports is only permitted at completion of the detailed design stage where no preliminary design has been undertaken.

See Clause 5.17.2 in GG 119.

Areas for development

Based on the RSAs reviewed in this sample, this section aims to identify elements that could be changed to align better with GG 119, or that could be improved so the reports follow best practice.

1. Problems including more than one road safety matter

A number of the reports in the sample included problems which made reference to more than one road safety matter. GG 119 states *“At stages 1, 2 and 3 the aim of the RSA report is to identify relevant road safety matters and communicate these in the form of road safety audit problems and recommendations”*.

Each problem should only include one road safety matter.

2. Health and safety issues concerning road workers

More than one report in the sample included health and safety issues concerning road workers that did not impact on road users.

Clause 5.1 Note 4 in GG119 states *“RSA does not cover health and safety issues concerning road workers during the construction, maintenance and operation of the road”*.

KEY REMINDER:

Road safety matters resulting from the operation of facilities for highway maintenance that affect road users shall be included in the scope of RSA.

3. RSA recommendations

A number of the recommendations in the sample reports included words such as **'must'** which has the potential to be misinterpreted as an instruction to the design team. Other terminology used included **'investigate'** and **'review'**, without explanation as to what improvement the review or investigation might establish. GG 119 defines an RSA recommendation as *"a proportionate and viable suggestion for improvement to eliminate or mitigate an identified road safety audit problem"*.

Note 1 to the GG 119 definition of an RSA recommendation states that *"in some circumstances, the recommendation can include further work to be undertaken by the design organisation to establish an appropriate mitigation measure or improvement"*.

Good Practice

1. Use of extracts from drawings to support text

A number of the reports in the sample made good use of drawing extracts to support the problem text. This is useful in helping the reader understand the problem raised, particularly where a site visit may not have taken place and a photograph, therefore, is potentially not available.

Clause 5.13 in GG 119 states that RSA reports shall include *"a location plan based on the scheme plan(s), marked up and referenced to problems and if available, photographs of the problems identified"*.

2. RSA team approval

All of the reports in the sample included details of who approved the RSA team.

Section 5 in GG 119 states that RSA reports shall include *"details of who supplied the RSA brief, who approved the RSA brief and who approved the RSA team"*.

KEY REMINDER:

Clause 5.13 in GG 119 states that RSA reports shall include *"Details of who supplied the RSA brief, who approved the RSA brief and who approved the RSA team"*.

RSA process requirements

It has been noted that some RSA reports include reference to the RSA process requirements, sometimes suggesting timescales and responsibilities for each stage of the process. Whilst guidance can be provided by other more informal means, RSA reports should not include reference to the process, templates or example statements.

KEY REMINDER:

Section 4 in GG 119 outlines the RSA process requirements. Any reference to these process requirements in the RSA report might be misinterpreted as an instruction from the RSA team and should therefore be avoided.

Continuing professional development

Continuing professional development

Table 3.8.2 in GG 119 provides guidance on continuing professional development (CPD) for road safety auditors. Whilst COVID-19 has prevented the majority of face-to-face CPD opportunities, there are numerous online resources available which auditors can access to maintain their CPD record.

KEY REMINDER:

Examples of organisations offering online resources suitable for CPD include:

The Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (CIHT)

<https://www.ciht.org.uk/>

The Society of Road Safety Auditors (SoRSA) <https://www.ciht.org.uk/sorsa/>

The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) <https://etsc.eu/>

The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) and Road Safety GB <https://www.pacts.org.uk/>