

Road Safety Audit

July 2021

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

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

SoRSA Chair

Congratulations to Dennis Symons, who was confirmed as Chair of the Society of Road Safety 21st Auditors (SoRSA) from June this year.

Den is a Principal Engineer within the Highways England South West Asset Delivery Road Safety Team having previously served as a Police officer for 30 years. During his time in the force, he worked for 10 years in roads policing and collision investigation and 7 years as a Road Casualty Reduction Officer, working with local highway authorities and what was then the Highways Agency.

He joined the Area 1 MAC contract as a Road Safety Engineer in 2007, later becoming a Principal Road Safety Engineer and moving with that role into Highways England in 2017.

SoRSA was established by CIHT in 2006 as a response to a growing call from professionals operating in the field of safety auditing and safety engineering practice in the UK, for a forum to exchange best practice and, importantly, to provide advice and ultimately routes to professional recognition for safety auditing practitioners.



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
- CPD opportunities

Scope

This review focuses on a sample of the total number of reports uploaded to the main database during the period January to March 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 and whether **Combined Stage 1 and 2 RSAs** are being undertaken in accordance with the requirements of GG 119.

During this period **a total of 180 RSAs were submitted**, 14 of which were carried out to HD 19/15. The remaining 166 were carried out to GG 119.

2 of the 14 RSAs were carried out to HD 19/15 because they were undertaken prior to the publication of GG 119. The remaining 12 were carried out to HD 19/15 due to contractual reasons.

The types of schemes covered by the submitted RSAs are shown in Figure 0 below.

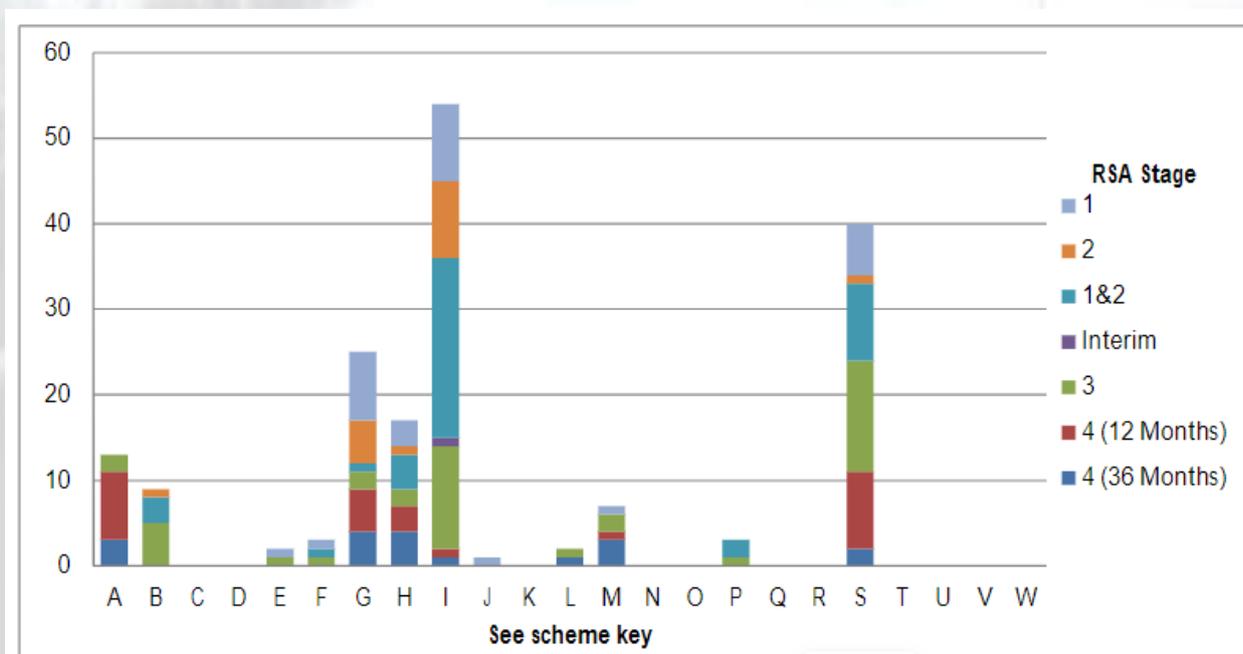


Figure 0 - RSAs by scheme type submitted during this 3-month period (January – March 2021)

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 Highways England inbox between 1 January 2021 and 31 March 2021 by each Highways England area.

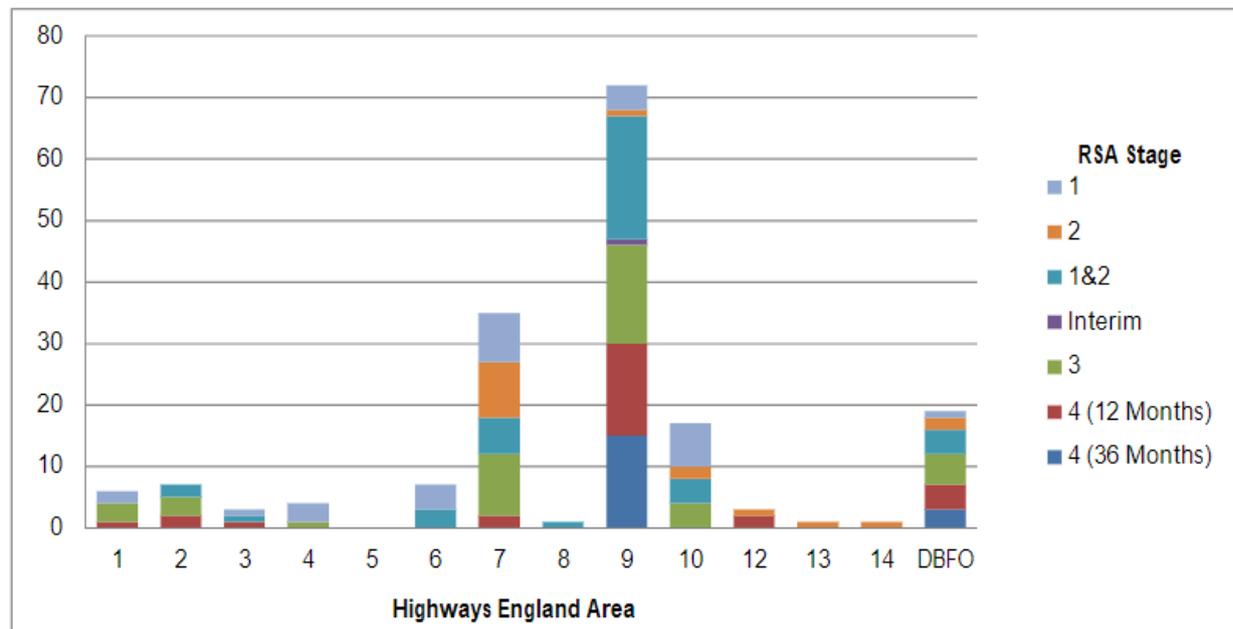


Figure 2 - RSAs submitted between 1 January 2021 and 31 March 2021 by Highways England Operational Area

72 of the RSAs submitted during this period were from Area 9 (40%). Of those, 15 (out of a total of 18 submitted to the inbox) were stage 4 (36 month) RSAs undertaken after the release of GG 119 in November 2018. All 15 were submitted to the inbox in January 2021.

Stage 4 36-month post opening RSAs have not been required since the release of GG 119 in November 2018.

The sample

Of the 180 reports submitted, 30 sample reports were reviewed. 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 1 submitted
Stage 1	13 of 30 submitted
Stage 2	5 of 17 submitted
Combined Stage 1 and 2	4 of 41 submitted
Stage 3	6 of 42 submitted
Stage 4	2 of 31 submitted
Stage 4 (36 month)	0 of 18 submitted

Given that 36-month post opening RSAs are not required under GG 119, none of these RSAs have been included in the sample.

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 to be undertaken.

13 of the 30 RSAs in the sample were undertaken whilst the relaxations reintroduced by Highways England's Chief Engineer were in place, between January and March 2021.

Only 1 of those was a stage 3 RSA for which the relaxations did not apply. 5 of the 13 included a site visit despite the relaxations being applicable at the time. The remaining 7 were carried out in line with the relaxations.

This shows that approximately 40% of the RSAs in the sample undertook site visits whilst the relaxations to site visits for road safety audits were in place.

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

Combined Stage 1 and Stage 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.

23% of the RSAs submitted to the inbox during this 3-month period were combined stage 1 and stage 2 RSAs. This is more than the 9% submitted between October and December 2020.

All of the combined stage 1 and 2 RSAs submitted during this period appeared to satisfy the requirements for a combined RSA. For clarity, it is recommended that reports include a statement summarising why stage 1 and 2 have been combined.

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. Reference has also been made to the feedback from SoRSA's 2021 Annual Reviews. This review is completed by all SoRSA members, ensuring that their experience and CPD is kept up to date.

1. Review of problems raised in previous stages of audit

The reports included in the sample had different approaches to reviewing problems which had been raised during the previous stages of audit. In some cases, previous problems were reviewed in an earlier section and then, if considered to remain outstanding, reiterated in the main body of the report. This duplication makes the report unnecessarily lengthy and makes the number of problems raised appear to be greater than reality. 6% of the reports reviewed by SoRSA this year did not review the problems raised in previous audits.

Previous problems should either be repeated or revised, not both.

Appendix D3 Items raised at previous road safety audits in GG 119 recommends:

RSAs report any of the RSA actions in the RSA response report for the previous stage that have been agreed for action but not completed. Where the RSA action is not completed, or an RSA response report is not provided, outstanding problems and recommendations will be repeated here.

Where the circumstances have changed it may be necessary to revise the earlier problem and recommendation and this will be included only in section 4.

2. Lack of information not necessarily a safety issue

A number of the RSAs in the sample raised problems with reference to information which was not available at the time of the RSA. There was no reference in the reports to that information being requested. This was also picked up in 5% of the reports reviewed by SoRSA this year.

Information requested but not supplied to should be identified in the introductory section of the RSA report.

Section 4 RSA process requirements in GG 119 states:

4.5 Where the RSA team has identified that the RSA brief is insufficient for their purpose, a request for further information shall be made to the Overseeing Organisation.

4.5.1 Any information requested but not supplied to the RSA team should be identified in the introduction to the RSA report.

3. Approvals

A number of the reports in the sample did not state where the necessary approvals had come from. SoRSA also identified that 28% of the reports did not include this information.

Section 5 in GG 119 states:

RSA reports shall include:

5.13 Details of who supplied the RSA brief, who approved the RSA brief and who approved the RSA team.

Good Practice

Scheme descriptions and objectives

The review found a number of reports included comprehensive descriptions of the schemes and their objectives. This is key to communicating the background information and giving context to the reader.

Requests for additional information

Some of the reports clearly stated what additional information was requested in the introductory section of the report. Text included what information was requested and what the outcome was. This information helps the reader to understand what information has formed the basis for the RSA and what information was unavailable.

Use of photos to reinforce problems

A number of the reports made excellent use of photos to reinforce the description of problems. Some used screen grabs from dash cams which is a useful addition, particularly for those RSAs undertaken during COVID-19 restrictions when site visits may not have been undertaken in the traditional way, or for those schemes where it is not possible to stop safely to obtain photographs.

Information relating to how the RSA was undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic

Some of the RSAs in the sample were undertaken either at a time when relaxations around the mandatory requirement for site visits were in place, or when national lockdown restrictions had been imposed by the government. A number of these reports comprehensively documented how the RSA was undertaken in light of the circumstances which were current at the time.

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/>