

Road Safety Audit

MAY 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 April edition comprises the review of RSA reports submitted to the Highways England inbox at roadsafetyaudit@highwaysengland.co.uk between October and December 2020 (inclusive).

SITE VISITS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The relaxations to site visits for road safety audits as a result of the national lockdown were revoked on 29th March 2021.

Highways England Wrong Way Driving: Mitigation Toolkit

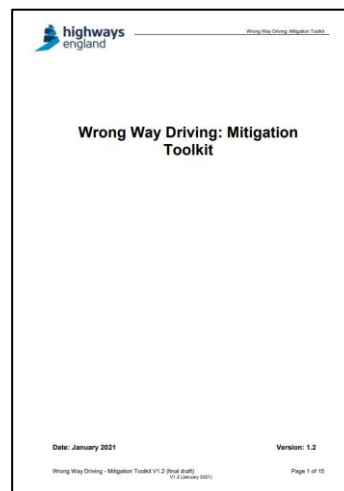
Research from 2017 identified that when a collision is caused by a vehicle being driven in the opposing direction along a one-way street or carriageway (wrong way driving) **it is twice as likely to result in someone being killed or seriously injured.**

To tackle the problem and reduce the risk of drivers turning the wrong way onto the network, Highways England have developed a wrong way driving mitigation toolkit.

The toolkit can also be used to inform the design process of any new schemes, major projects or renewals and help ensure that the risk of wrong way driving is mitigated as far as is practicable.

The latest version of the toolkit was published in January 2021 and can be found here:

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



DID YOU KNOW?

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

What is included in this Newsletter?

- Areas for development
- Good Practice
- Impact of COVID-19 pandemic
- Update on combined stage 1 and 2 RSAs
- Summary of RSAs undertaken in 2020
- Road Safety Auditor CV Best Practice
- Summary of submitted RSAs during 2020
- CPD opportunities

Scope

This review focuses on a sample of the total number of reports uploaded to the Highways England's RSA database during the period October to December 2020. 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, how **combined stage 1 / 2 RSAs** are being undertaken compared with the requirements of GG 119 and a summary of the RSAs submitted throughout 2020.

During this period **a total of 123 RSAs were submitted**, 9 of which were carried out to HD 19/15. 4 of which were undertaken prior to the publication of GG119 and the remaining 5 carried out to HD 19/15 for contractual reasons. The remaining 114 were carried out to GG 119.

The types of schemes covered by the submitted RSAs are shown in Figure 1 below.

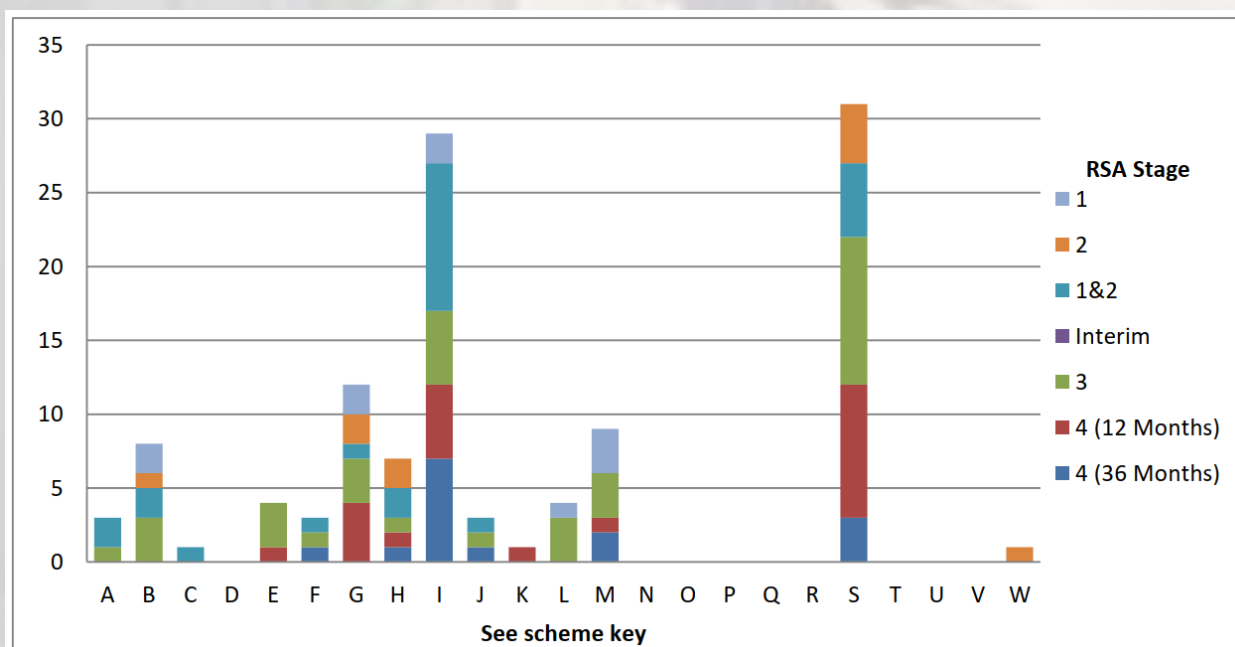


Figure 1 - RSAs by scheme type submitted during this 3-month period (October – December 2020)

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		

KEY REMINDER

If you are involved in or aware of audits on any type of scheme then please remember to submit finalised road safety audits to roadsafetyaudit@highwaysengland.co.uk, or remind those involved in the audit to send them in.

RSAs submitted by Highways England areas

Figure 2 below illustrates all RSAs submitted to the Highways England Safer Roads - Design Team (SR-DT) inbox between 1 October 2020 and 31 December 2020 by each Highways England area.

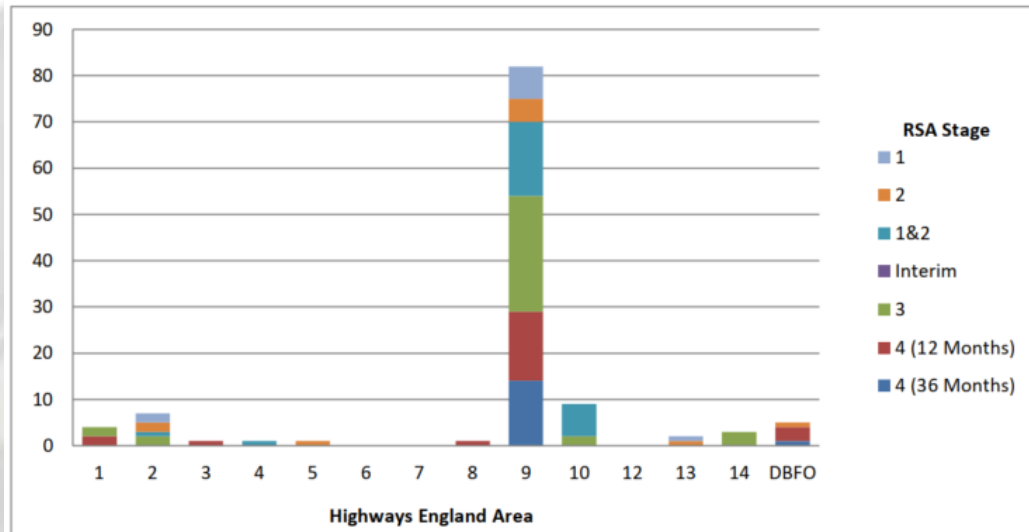


Figure 2 RSAs submitted between 1 October 2020 and 31 December 2020 by Highways England Operational Area

82 of the RSAs submitted during this period were from Area 9 (66.7%). Of those 82, 77 were submitted to the inbox in December 2020 with site visit dates ranging from 2018 to 2020.

The sample

Of the 123 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	None submitted
Stage 1	7 of 10 submitted
Stage 2	5 of 10 submitted
Combined Stage 1 and 2	3 of 25 submitted
Stage 3	13 of 34 submitted
Stage 4	2 of 29 submitted
36-month Stage 4	0 of 15 submitted

15 36-month stage 4 RSAs were submitted to the RSA inbox during this period. Whilst this is less than the 46 submitted between July and September 2020, stage 4 36-month post opening RSAs have not been a requirement since the release of GG 119 in November 2018. Because of this, none of these RSAs have been included in the sample. 12 of the 36-month stage 4 RSAs were undertaken after GG 119 was published in November 2018.

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 current best practice.

Details in the introduction

A number of the reports did not include details of who approved the RSA brief. The RSA brief is required to be approved by the overseeing organisation. See clause 4.3 and 5.13 in GG 119.

KEY REMINDER: The RSA report needs to include details of who supplied the RSA brief, who approved the RSA brief and who approved the RSA team.

Scheme and problem location description

A number of the RSAs included in the sample included location plans which were of poor quality or such a small scale that it was hard to locate problems on the map.

Items raised at previous road safety audits

A number of issues were identified with the way in which the RSAs in the sample were reporting RSA actions which were not completed or actions which were outstanding:

- Previous problems being included but no information as to which RSA the problem originated from. This information would help provide an audit trail.
- A number of the RSAs stated that the RSA team were not aware of any previous RSAs. This sentence could incorrectly put the onus onto the RSA team. It is the Overseeing Organisation's responsibility to inform the RSA team of previous audits.

KEY REMINDER: RSA reports should include any RSA actions from the RSA response report that have been agreed but not actioned since the previous design phase.

Good practice

Impact of COVID-19 on traffic flows at the time of the site visit

Where site visits were undertaken at a time when a national lockdown was in place, some of the RSAs made reference to the likelihood that traffic flows would be lighter than usual. It is important to note this variation from the norm as this could impact on the road safety implications of the proposals.

Use of photographs

A number of the RSAs included in the sample made good use of labelled photographs and screen grabs from models and scheme plans to clearly outline the problem and potential collisions that may arise.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

Relaxations to the mandatory requirements for site visits as part of RSAs were first introduced in March 2020 and revoked on the 30th June 2020.

5 of the 123 RSAs submitted to the RSA inbox between October and December 2020 were undertaken whilst the relaxations announced by Highways England's Chief Engineer were in place. All of these RSAs were carried out in line with the relaxations.

The remaining 118 RSAs were undertaken at times when the relaxations had been lifted. All of these site visits were carried out in line with the requirements of GG 119. This shows that auditors have responded appropriately to the guidance issued by Highways England Chief Engineer.

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

Update on combined stage 1 and 2 RSAs

Figure 3 below shows that since the release of GG 119 in November 2018, apart from an initial increase in Q1 in 2019 being submitted to the RSA inbox, there has been a reduction in the number of combined stage 1 and 2 RSAs being undertaken. There was however an overall decrease in the number of RSAs submitted in Q2 of 2019 onwards.

In 2018 and 2019, combined stage 1 and 2 RSAs accounted for 38% and 37% of the total RSAs undertaken respectively. In 2020 27% of the RSAs undertaken were combined stage 1 and 2 RSAs suggesting some evidence of a decrease.

Whilst combined stage 1 and 2 RSAs will continue to be used where schemes have not been subject to a preliminary design, this decrease is a good indication that these stages are being combined as an exception rather than being deemed usual practice.

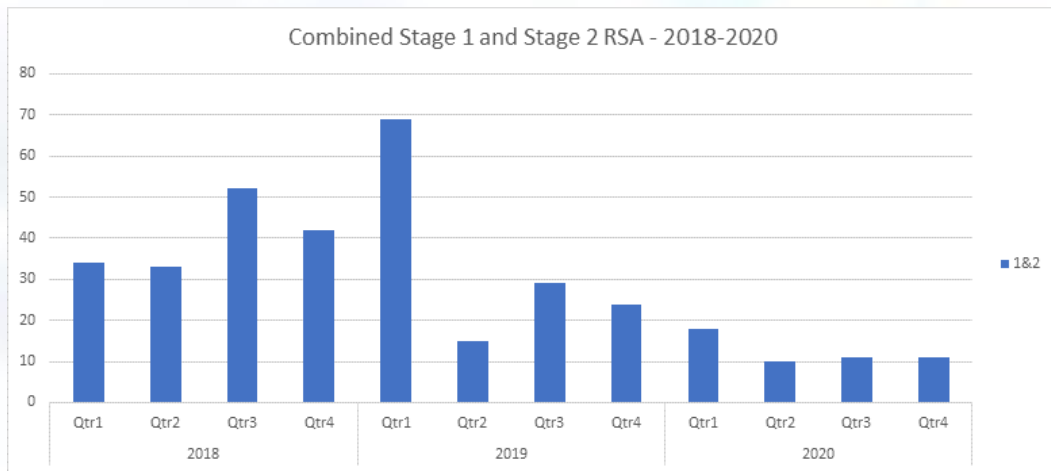


Figure 3 No. of combined stage 1 and 2 RSAs undertaken 2018 - 2020

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.

Reported road casualties in Great Britain

Provisional estimates for reported road casualties in Great Britain for the year ending June 2020 are now available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-provisional-estimates-year-ending-june-2020>

The validated data is to be made available in March 2021.

It is not yet clear what the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has had on casualty statistics, but when this is understood it will need to be taken into account when using data in the future which has potentially been subjected to this impact.

Summary of RSAs undertaken in 2020

This section provides a summary of the RSA reports submitted to the inbox which took place in 2020. The date the RSA was undertaken was taken from the date of the site visit. It does not account for all of the RSAs submitted to the inbox during this 12-month period, as this would include historic RSAs which could have been undertaken as early as 2018.

Figure 4 shows the total number of RSAs at each stage which were undertaken during each quarter of 2020 and submitted to the inbox.

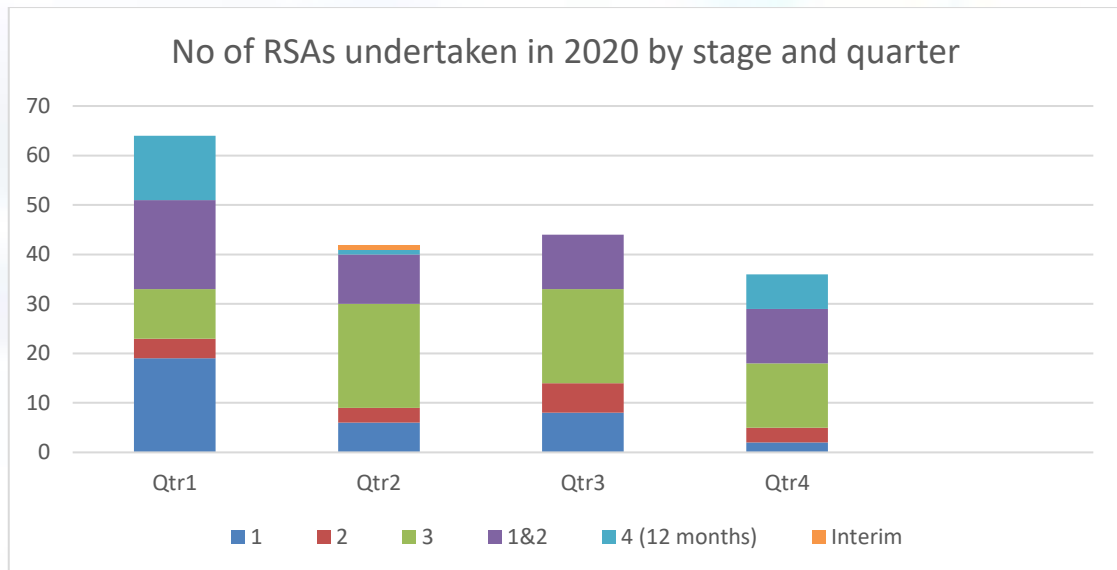


Figure 4 Number of RSAs undertaken in 2020 by stage and quarter

Stage 1 RSAs

35 stage 1 RSAs were undertaken between January and December 2020 in comparison to 43 undertaken in 2019. There is no material difference in these numbers.

More stage 1 RSAs were undertaken in quarter 1 of 2020 [19] compared with the remaining quarters.

Stage 2 RSAs

The total number of stage 2 RSAs undertaken in 2020 decreased to 16 compared to 36 undertaken in 2019. The reason for this decrease is unclear at this time.

The number of stage 2 RSAs undertaken each quarter of 2020 was less than 10% of the total for quarters 1, 2 and 3. In quarter 4, stage 2 RSAs made up 14% of the total.

Combined stage 1 and 2 RSAs

A total of 186 RSAs were undertaken in 2020, of which 50 were combined stage 1 and 2 RSAs [26%]. This is less than the 29% [137 of 472] submitted in 2019.

This might suggest that combined stage 1 and 2 RSAs are now being applied more appropriately in accordance with the wording in GG 119.

Stage 3 RSAs

A total of 63 stage 3 RSAs were undertaken between January and December 2020 in comparison to 120 undertaken in 2019. This could be a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The number of stage 3 RSAs decreased in quarter 1 [10] and quarter 4 [13] of 2020 compared with quarter 2 [21] and quarter 3 [19]. These periods align with the first two lockdowns which were announced by the UK government in March and October 2020. This suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the number of stage 3 RSAs being undertaken when government restrictions were in place.

Road safety auditor CV best practice

Do

Demonstrate the following:

- ✓ 10 days of formal collision data analysis or road safety engineering / road design training.
- ✓ A minimum of 2 days CPD in the field of Road Safety Audit, collision data analysis or road safety engineering in the last 12 months.
- ✓ Experience relevant to the type of scheme being audited.

Include the following:

- ✓ Dates against relevant experience.
- ✓ Date the CV was last updated.
- ✓ Brief description of schemes included and your role in them.

See Table 3.8.2 in GG 119 for more details on RSA team competencies.

Don't

- x Approval is only given if relevant and adequate experience is demonstrated within your CV.

Remember at least one individual within the RSA team undertaking RSA on the SRN must hold a certificate of competency in RSA.

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/>