



## **ACPO Position Statement:**

### **The Self Administered Interview (SAI) Tool**

**National Investigative Interviewing  
Strategic Steering Group (NISSG)**

## **Introduction**

The Self Administered Interview (SAI) tool was developed to obtain initial accounts from eyewitnesses to an event for which there may be multiple witnesses when resources are so restricted that traditional interviews are not immediately possible. The SAI tool aims to “facilitate an investigation by obtaining critical information quickly and effectively” (Gabbert and Hope, 2012).

## **Background**

Following successful laboratory-based trials of the SAI tool, the ACPO National Investigative Interviewing Steering Group (NIISG) supported field trials. These field trials related to the application of the SAI tool in an investigative context to determine the practical and evidential benefits that could be derived from its use. An evaluation of the SAI was carried out with participating forces and a report submitted to ACPO in January 2012.

The evaluation report demonstrates some positive emerging results from the field trials. Feedback from participating forces has reported that the SAI tool has resulted in the identification of additional significant witnesses to an event and that it has been of assistance when subsequently obtaining more detailed accounts. The evaluation includes two case studies involving the use of the SAI tool that have progressed to Court. Challenges to the use of the SAI tool were made in one of these cases but were later dropped when further information was provided concerning the tool and the rationale for its use was fully accepted by the Court.

There was agreement in the evaluation that the SAI tool appears suited for use in situations where there are multiple witnesses and limited police resources. In such cases, its use helps to determine which individuals should be prioritised for an investigative interview.

## **The ACPO Position**

Despite this positive feedback it must be acknowledged that these findings can only be seen as *suggestive* to date due to the limited nature of the evaluation. It

is only based upon four case studies from UK forces and a survey from one force where eight respondents had used the tool in an investigative context.

The current evaluation of the SAI tool lacks sufficient detail for the NIISG to endorse its application with confidence in an investigative setting. A more thorough empirically-based and in-depth evaluation needs to be conducted against each of the three objectives set down in the original proposal for the field trials. It is particularly important that any further evaluation includes the implications for the use of the tool in the Court process; the incidents to which it is best applied; the procedures that would need to be developed to ensure its appropriate use within the investigative context; and, the financial implications for Forces associated with its use.

**It is important to note that the SAI is not intended to replace an investigative interview; it is simply a tool that supports the interview process.**

### **Acknowledgement**

This position statement was prepared by Dr. Nicky Miller, Principal Research Officer (Knowledge), National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA).

In the event of any queries about this position statement please contact Dr. Nicky Miller at [nicky.miller@npia.pnn.police.uk](mailto:nicky.miller@npia.pnn.police.uk), Gary Shaw (the National Interview Adviser) at [gary.shaw@soca.pnn.police.uk](mailto:gary.shaw@soca.pnn.police.uk) or Kevin Smith (the National Vulnerable Witness Adviser) at [kev.smith@soca.pnn.police.uk](mailto:kev.smith@soca.pnn.police.uk)