

## Self-Administered Interview (SAI<sup>®</sup>) - Briefing Note

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

### Why was the SAI<sup>®</sup> developed?

The SAI<sup>®</sup> was developed to address the serious challenge faced by investigators when an incident occurs for which there are numerous eyewitnesses (e.g. terrorist attack, large-scale major incident or accident, serious assault in a public place etc.). Any of these witnesses may have potentially critical leads for the investigation. However, investigators may not have the resources in terms of time, expertise or personnel to conduct interpersonal interviews with many witnesses shortly after an incident. Since 2009, the research team has worked closely with both UK and international police forces on the evaluation and implementation of the SAI<sup>®</sup> with real witnesses. To date, the SAI<sup>®</sup> has made an important contribution to a number of live investigations by securing detailed initial accounts, enabling the efficient prioritisation of witnesses, and facilitating the identification of additional witnesses, in a range of criminal incidents.

Published in 2019, the College of Policing Guidelines for First Responders (Obtaining Initial Accounts from Victims and Witnesses) advises use of the SAI<sup>®</sup> as a Strategic Recommendation

[[https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Standards/Guidelines/Initial-accounts/Documents/Initial\\_Accounts\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Standards/Guidelines/Initial-accounts/Documents/Initial_Accounts_Guidelines.pdf)].

### What can the SAI<sup>®</sup> contribute during COVID-19?

The SAI<sup>®</sup> is a self-administered reporting tool. It takes the form of a standardised protocol of clear instructions and questions that enable witnesses to provide their own initial account without having to engage in a face-to-face interaction with a police officer. As such, the SAI<sup>®</sup> provides a means of capturing a detailed initial account during a period in which it may be difficult to conduct face-to-face interviews with cooperative witnesses or victims, who have sufficient literacy skills and do not require additional support. The SAI<sup>®</sup> should not be used with vulnerable victims and witnesses.

### Is there a cost associated with use of the SAI<sup>®</sup>?

No. The SAI<sup>®</sup> reporting tool is freely available for use by police forces who confirm agreement with the Terms of Use put in place by the research team to protect the integrity of the tool.

### Can the SAI<sup>®</sup> be completed electronically?

Yes. Recent research indicates that the benefits of reporting via the SAI<sup>®</sup> are the same irrespective of whether it is completed on a laptop, on a mobile device, or by hand. Forces will need to identify how to integrate online formats with their existing systems.

### Are any other versions of the SAI<sup>®</sup> available?

The SAI<sup>®</sup> is a generic reporting tool which can be used to report different kinds of incidents. However, we have developed a number of derivative tools in collaboration with police practitioners to support reporting in different contexts, including Road Traffic Collisions, Volume Crime Reporting, and Missing Person investigations. Should translated versions be required, forces are advised to engage professional translation services.

### Can I make changes or revisions to the SAI<sup>®</sup> myself?

No. The SAI<sup>®</sup> is a copyrighted tool that has been subjected to extensive empirical and field-testing. If you wish to make changes to the content of the tool, you must contact the researchers directly to discuss your requirements.

### How is the SAI<sup>®</sup> used operationally?

We advise the development of a Force-wide standard operating procedure for the use of the SAI<sup>®</sup> to ensure appropriate authority for use in approved circumstances (e.g. under the guidance of an interview adviser or senior investigator officer).

### How can I access the SAI<sup>®</sup> for use in my force?

Contact the research team (details below) forwarding a copy of your force logo. We can also provide briefing/training materials for you to distribute to your teams.

### For more information, contact:

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