**Research Project**

Self-Administered Interview

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            [**Personal profile of Dr Fiona Gabbert...**](https://web.archive.org/web/20130704114207/https%3A/portal.abertay.ac.uk/portal/page/portal/SHARED/f/F513576)

**Summary:**

Statements made to Police in forensic interviews often provide major leads in investigations and help solve cases. Perhaps more importantly, reliable eyewitness testimony plays a compelling role in the Courts and aids the legal decision making process.

However, a concern with adult interviewing currently surrounds the time-critical nature of eyewitness memory in that a significant problem for investigators is the delay incurred between individuals witnessing a crime event and providing their statement. Ideally witnesses should be interviewed as soon as possible after a report of an incident. In direct response to the problem of being able to obtain high quality witness information as quickly as possible, Fiona Gabbert (University of Abertay, Dundee), Lorraine Hope (University of Portsmouth) and Ron Fisher (Florida International University) have developed a recall tool called the Self-Administered Interview (SAI) that can be used to elicit a comprehensive initial statement from witnesses at the scene of a crime. The SAI is a protocol of instructions and questions, based upon well-established cognitive theories of remembering, that support eyewitnesses when recollecting and recording their memories of an incident. The advantage of the SAI is that it can be distributed when there are many witnesses at a crime scene and they can write down the description of what happened. This system has been extensively tested in staged eyewitness memory experiments and, importantly, it is currently being validated for use by police officers in field trials. These field-trials have demonstrated benefits in the real-world. As such, the SAI delivers both practical and evidential benefits to the police, thus impacting on current police practice.

**Impact of the research:**

Police procedure in Manchester has been adapted to incorporate use of SAI's when collecting evidence. In reality, this means that police are able to collect witness statements quickly and more efficiently.

* Greater Manchester Police has prepared an in-house online training package on for the SAI (background, rationale, suitable contexts, force procedure etc). GMP has also surveyed officers on the use of the SAI and collated positive feedback on its use and identified some training requirements.

In a recent mass shooting case in England and Wales investigators distributed the SAI and collected information that would not have otherwise been possible given the numbers of witnesses involved.

* The SIO provided the following feedback: "Out of all the SAIs issued only one person failed to complete the form. The forms that were completed were comprehensive, and a few I would say were more detailed and beyond the standard that some officers sometimes produce. Many contained useful detail in proving the case, and in the case of one witness, crucial evidence in terms of the rider and passengers' actions leading up to the event which without doubt will show the joint venture in this case. The SAI forms have led to another three crucial statements being taken."

British Transport Police initiated a trial and have used the SAI for a number of incidents including serious assault.

Tayside Police have approved involvement in the SAI trials.

Trials with Oslo Police, Norway, commenced in Autumn 2010. This is the first translation of the tool for international trials. German and Dutch translations have also been prepared for research purposes and an Arabic translation is planned in early 2011.

**Publications:**

[**An overview of research and KE on interviewing techniques at University of Abertay Dundee**](https://web.archive.org/web/20130704114207/http%3A/www.sipr.ac.uk/downloads/AnnRep2011/Interviewing_Abertay.pdf) (SIPR Annual Report, 2011)

Please see: [**https://portal.abertay.ac.uk/portal/page/portal/SHARED/f/F513576**](https://web.archive.org/web/20130704114207/https%3A/portal.abertay.ac.uk/portal/page/portal/SHARED/f/F513576) for further publications on Dr Gabbert's work