



UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH



SELF-ASSESSMENT OF SPECIALIST INTERVIEWS (SASI) COURSE



WHO IS THE COURSE FOR?

Police officers who have undergone Achieving Best Evidence interviewer training and who regularly interview vulnerable victims and witnesses.

WHY THIS COURSE?

The Achieving Best Evidence guidelines (ABE; Ministry of Justice, 2011) offer the official protocol for video recorded interviews with vulnerable witnesses in England and Wales. In December 2014, a critical review was published by HM Inspectorate of Constabularies and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate in which they examined the quality of video recorded evidence of victims/witnesses and its use in the prosecution process, and made many recommendations.

One recommendation (“...all forces need to ensure that some structured self-evaluation by interviewers takes place, including a review of the interview recording and plan, and that these evaluations are assessed on a regular basis by interview advisors, or by accredited supervisors”) underpins the design of this course.

The SASI course will be invaluable to officers who will then be able to defend their professional practice based on attendance on the course and regular self-evaluation of their interview performance.

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH EVIDENCE?

One-off, week or two-week long, training sessions currently of the type provided for police officers in England and Wales may increase knowledge and awareness of desirable practices but seldom affect the way that police interviewers actually interview. Training itself is insufficient to ensure that the required skills are exhibited in interviews and, if they are, the lack of refresher training and evaluation of performance is likely to lead to ‘skills fade’. In summary, there is currently a lack of sustained supervision and feedback for interviewers who have undergone initial ABE interviewer training.

But how best to mitigate against ‘skills fade’ and facilitate regular feedback to interviewers? With the current cuts in police funding, the most efficient means of achieving regular monitoring might best be achieved via self-evaluation. Generally, there is little relationship between interviewers’ perceptions of their adherence to best practice and their actual interviewing performance. The SASI course should increase interviewers’ objectivity and thus increase the usefulness of self-evaluation. Objective self-evaluation, on a regular basis, might well offer the most cost effective and enduring method of tackling this problem.

COURSE CONTENT

This one-day course, delivered at a location to suit each police service, will:

- Introduce self-assessment of interviews as a valuable tool for continuing professional development.
- Train participants to use the Interviewer's Self-Assessment Form (ISAF) to help structure their self-assessments.
- Facilitate participants' consideration of their interviewing practice by highlighting strengths and also areas for development.

ABOUT US

Our expertise and experience



Dr Lucy Akehurst

Principal Lecturer and
Researcher in Psychology,
University of Portsmouth

Dr Akehurst's PhD research involved liaison with legal professionals, police officers and social workers. She investigated numerous issues regarding the detection of deception in children and adults. Within the Department of Psychology at the University of Portsmouth she is currently the Associate Head of Department for Knowledge Transfer. Dr Akehurst has published extensively on issues surrounding the investigative interviewing of vulnerable witnesses and judgments of their credibility. Over the last 20 years, Dr Akehurst has worked with numerous professional groups with the main aim of disseminating research findings and seeking applications for those in the field.



Dr Julie Cherryman

Principal Lecturer and
Researcher in Psychology,
University of Portsmouth

Dr Cherryman's PhD research concerned the specialist investigative interviewing of suspects and witnesses by police officers. She focused on police officers' interviewing skills as well as skills gaps. Subsequently, Dr Cherryman has been part of a team that provided training materials for Achieving Best Evidence (2002), and has been involved in the training of police officers in interviewing skills, including 'training the trainers' concerning the investigative interviewing of people with learning disabilities. Dr Cherryman remains passionate about helping police officers' to improve their interviewing skills and she believes that police officers' self evaluations of investigative interviews will help to enhance interviewing practice.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

If ABE interviewers learn to reliably evaluate their own interviews (and those of others), they will become better interviewers.

A good way to improve their interviewing skills is to:

- Recognise their strengths and weaknesses
- Improve their performance month on month
- Break out of any bad habits

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

'The self-assessment form focuses in on the question types and makes me aware of what I actually say as opposed to what I think I have said'

'The course and assessment form helped me to put into practice the theory about how to review my interviews'

'The self-assessment form is easy to use and the SASI course gave me a chance to reflect'

WHAT WILL WE PROVIDE?

All training materials including interviewer self-assessment forms, a guidance booklet, and stationery.

WHAT WILL YOU PROVIDE?

A room suitable for up to 15 participants with facilities for a Powerpoint presentation and presentation of an interview (via memory stick or DVD player) as well as refreshments throughout the day or facilities for delegates to purchase refreshments.

WHAT IS THE COST OF THE COURSE?

The cost of these services is £1,500 plus the travel expenses of the trainer (and overnight accommodation, if necessary). It is the responsibility of each police service to invite up to 15 participants to the SASI course.

CONTACT US

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