E-valu-it User Survey 2015

March 2015

1   Introduction

Part of RoSPA's road safety programme includes providing advice and support to road safety practitioners on road safety evaluation. Evaluation is a systematic method of understanding how effective road safety interventions are, and how they can be improved. The support focuses on Education, Training and Publicity interventions.

One element of RoSPA's evaluation support is the website www.RoadSafetyEvaluation.com. The site includes information on how practitioners can conduct their own road safety evaluations. It also hosts the E-valu-it toolkit which reviews answers to a set of questions and produces a set of recommendations on how best to conduct that evaluation. The toolkit also incorporates the answers into a report template for when the evaluation is complete and is ready for write up.

The site is well used; there are hundreds of projects in progress. The number of final evaluation reports that are published on the website, however, is lower than expected. 44% of the projects created are at the questionnaire stage and 39% are at the recommendations stage. A key element to the user survey, therefore, was to gain an understanding of why evaluation projects get stuck at these stages and do not go on to be published.

1.1 Purpose of the user survey

The main aim of the user survey was to help understand why users find it difficult to complete and publish their evaluation projects. To do so the survey would:
- Measure some of the objectives for E-valu-it (which can be found in Box 1)
- Gain some understanding of barriers to conducting and completing evaluation projects
- Gain some understanding of the type of additional support users would prefer

> **Box 1: E-valu-it Toolkit Intervention Objectives**
>
> - To observe a 20% increase in users' self-ratings of their ability to plan evaluations of Education, Training or Publicity interventions.
> - To observe a 20% increase in users' confidence to conduct evaluations of Education, Training or Publicity interventions.
> - To observe a 20% increase in users' ability to advise others on evaluating Education, Training or Publicity interventions.

2 Method

The method for data collection was an online survey. Respondents were given two weeks to complete the survey in January 2015. In addition to the original online link two reminders were sent to those who had not completed the survey at that point. The survey can be found in the Appendix.

The sample for the survey was selected from those who had registered for an account with the E-valu-it toolkit. To use E-valu-it, users must sign up to the website (which is free) so they can save their projects and return to them later if necessary.

The survey link was emailed to those who had agreed to be contacted when they initially signed up to the website. Those who had an email address that indicated that they were not from the UK were excluded (e.g. ending .au .nz). This left 573 who were sent the survey link. Of these, the following were not included in the final sample as their emails were not delivered back with the messages found in Table 1.

Table 1 Undelivered Email Messages

	573 Original Contacts
Respondent changed job role	-19
Out of office - return date after data collection period	-13
Undeliverable email (incorrect email address or address no longer exists)	-114
Final number of possible respondents	**427**

The final number of respondents who had the opportunity to complete the survey was 427. Of these, 60 completed the questionnaire giving a response rate of 14%. This is lower than would be expected for an online survey, possibly due to the nature of the work patterns of road safety practitioners. If practitioners were delivering road safety activities in the field, they would have had less time in the office to complete the

survey in the given timeframe. Additionally, given the significant changes in local authorities since E-valu-it was launched, those who received the email may have moved departments within the same organisation. They may have kept their email address but did not work in road safety at the time of the survey.

3   Results

Results in this section are largely based on the survey completed in January 2015, as described in the methods section. Some questions, however, were replicated from a previous survey, conducted in 2011, to understand if users have changed since this time. The 2011 survey was completed 4 months after the E-valu-it website was launched. The results from the 2011 survey will be discussed here where direct comparisons of the questions between the two years can be made.

3.1 Demographics

The majority of those who responded to the survey worked in a local authority (58%). Other types of organisation were represented, however, none of these made up more than 15% of the total sample.

Figure 1 Type of organisation respondents employed by (n=60)
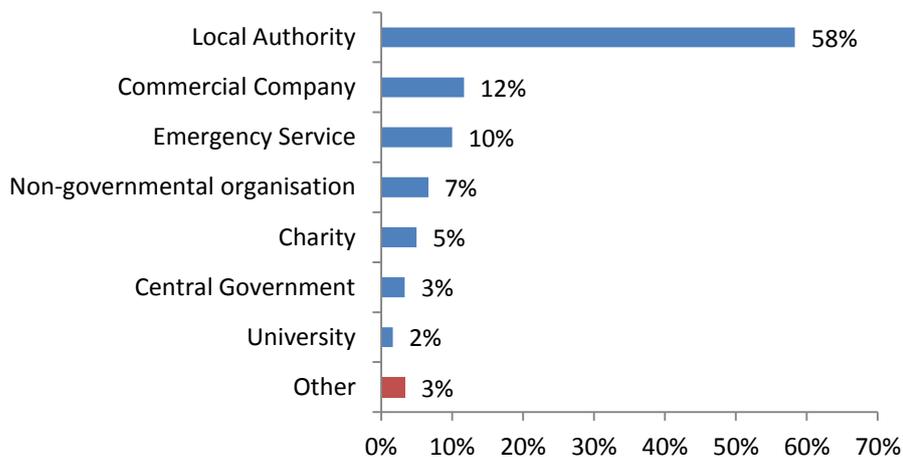
Note: Other consisted of partnership working, usually between a local authority and emergency services.

Respondents were asked to indicate which specialism best described their job role. More than one option could be selected. The most likely specialism to be selected was Road Safety Education, of which 69% stated was a part of their job role. Alternatively, traffic enforcement or statistics were amongst the least likely specialism involved in respondents' job roles (7%).

Figure 2 Job specialism (n=59)
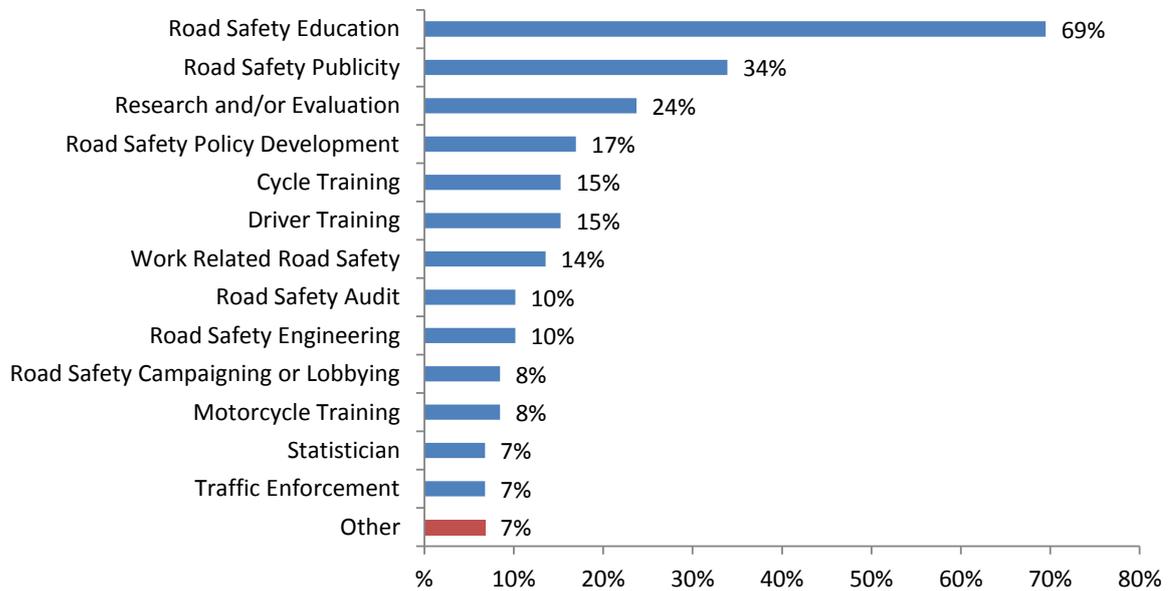
Note: Other consisted of those working in health and safety (n=2), one person working in community safety and another whose job role included a mix of most of the specialisms.

When thinking about evaluation in relation to their occupation, 67% said that evaluation made up less than half of their job role. No-one in the sample said that evaluation made up the entirety of their job role.

Figure 3 How much of job role taken up by evaluation
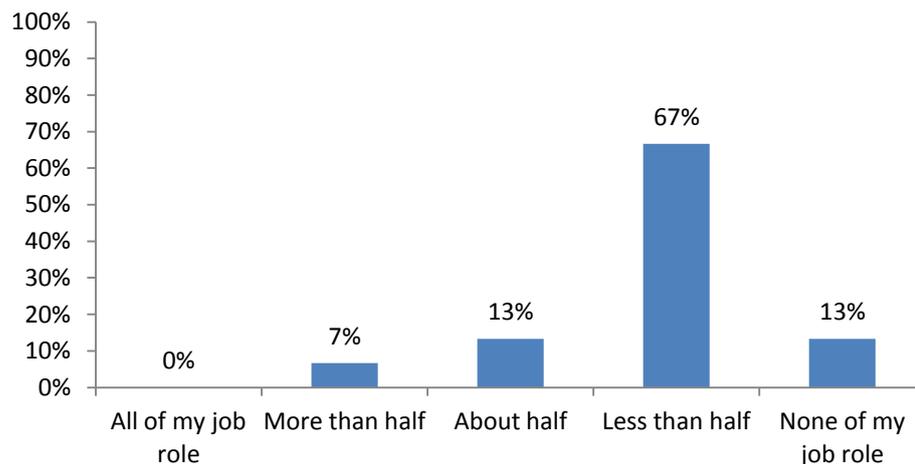
3.2 Evaluation training, knowledge and skills

70% of the sample had attended a training day on evaluation within the last 5 years. 65% would be interested in going to an evaluation training day in the future (43% of

these had already been to a training day in the last 5 years, 22% had not). Those interested in attending a training day in the future were asked whether cost would influence a decis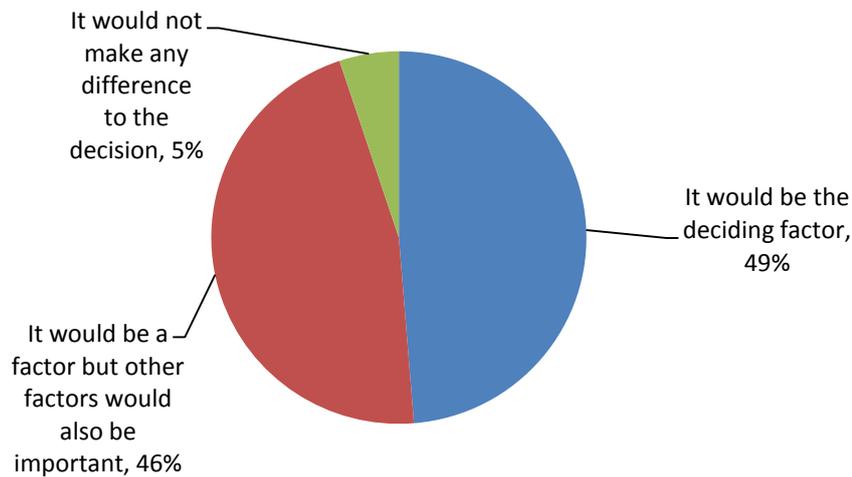ion for them to attend. For 46% of respondents cost would at least factor into the decision and for 49% it would be the deciding factor.

Figure 4 Influence of cost on a decision to attend an evaluation training day

It would not make any difference to the decision, 5%

It would be a factor but other factors would also be important, 46%

It would be the deciding factor, 49%

Respondents also rated their own knowledge and skills in relation to evaluation. They rated themselves on a five point scale on the following variables: willingness to evaluate, confidence to evaluate, ability to plan an evaluation and ability to advise others on how to evaluate. A score of 1 referred to a negative view of their knowledge and skills, a score of 5 referred to a positive view of their knowledge and skills.

Respondents rated themselves most highly on willingness to evaluate (Figure 5). Mean rating scores for willingness were at least 12% higher than the other variables on which respondents rated themselves (this was a statistically significant difference[1], i.e. one that is greater than would be expected by chance).

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[1] Willingness – Confidence $t(59) = 4.70$, $p < .001$; Willingness – Ability to plan $t(59) = 5.52$, $p < .001$; Willingness – Ability to advise $t(59) = 6.06$, $p < .001$

Figure 5 Self report mean scores on respondent's evaluation knowledge and skills
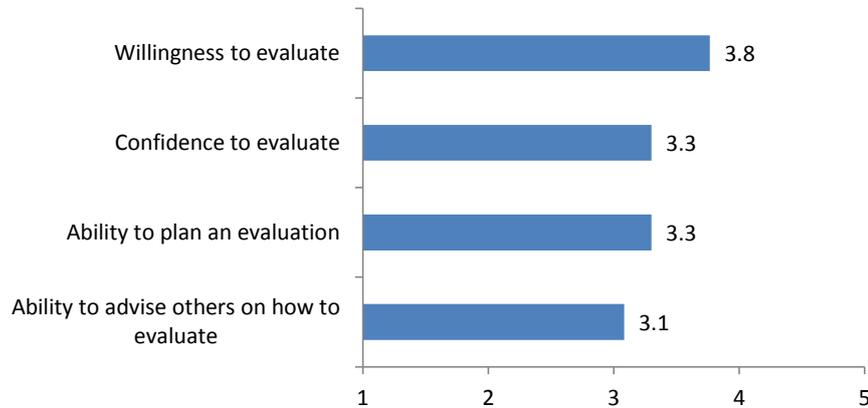
Note: 1=negative view of knowledge and skills, 5=positive view of knowledge and skills.

Self report ratings of knowledge and skills were also recorded in the 2011 user survey. Mean scores on knowledge and skills, between the two years, have remained largely the same.

Figure 6 Self report knowledge and skills ratings on a scale of 1-5: 2011 and 2015 comparison
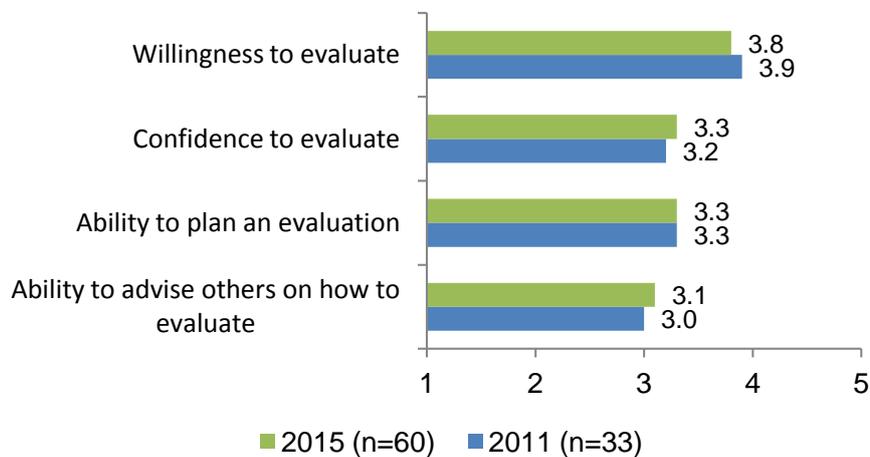
Note: Rated on a scale of 1 to 5. 1=negative view of knowledge and skills, 5=positive view of knowledge and skills.

Respondents were also asked what they thought the most and least challenging part of an evaluation project was. The part of the project most likely to be rated as the most challenging was choosing the outcome design. The outcome design refers to whether there will be any collection of data before the intervention and whether there will be a comparison group.

Figure 7 Most challenging part of an evaluation project (n=60)

Part	%
Choosing the outcome design (e.g. pre and post/before…	28%
Deciding to do an evaluation	17%
Writing questions (e.g. for a questionnaire or focus group)	15%
Writing a report	12%
Collecting the data	10%
Choosing the methods (e.g. questionnaire, focus group)	8%
Analysing the results	7%
Acting on the report	3%
Circulating the report	0%
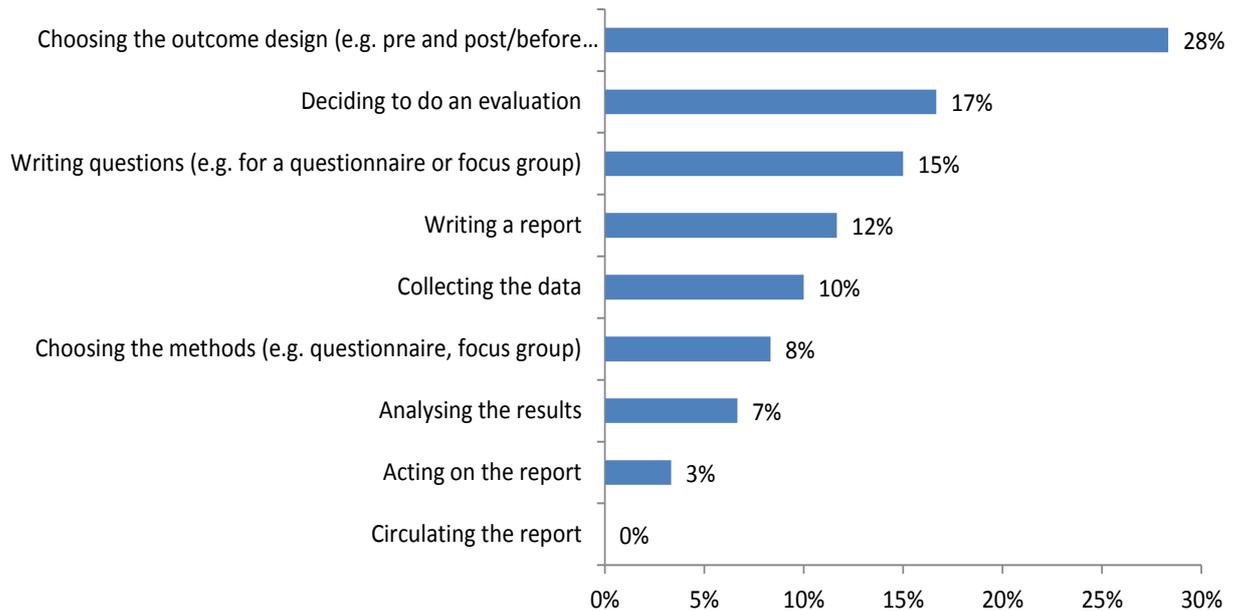
The part of the evaluation that was most likely to be rated as the least challenging was deciding to do an evaluation (40% of respondents). It should be noted, however, that deciding to do an evaluation was also relatively high on the previous list of the *most* challenging parts of evaluation (17% of respondents).
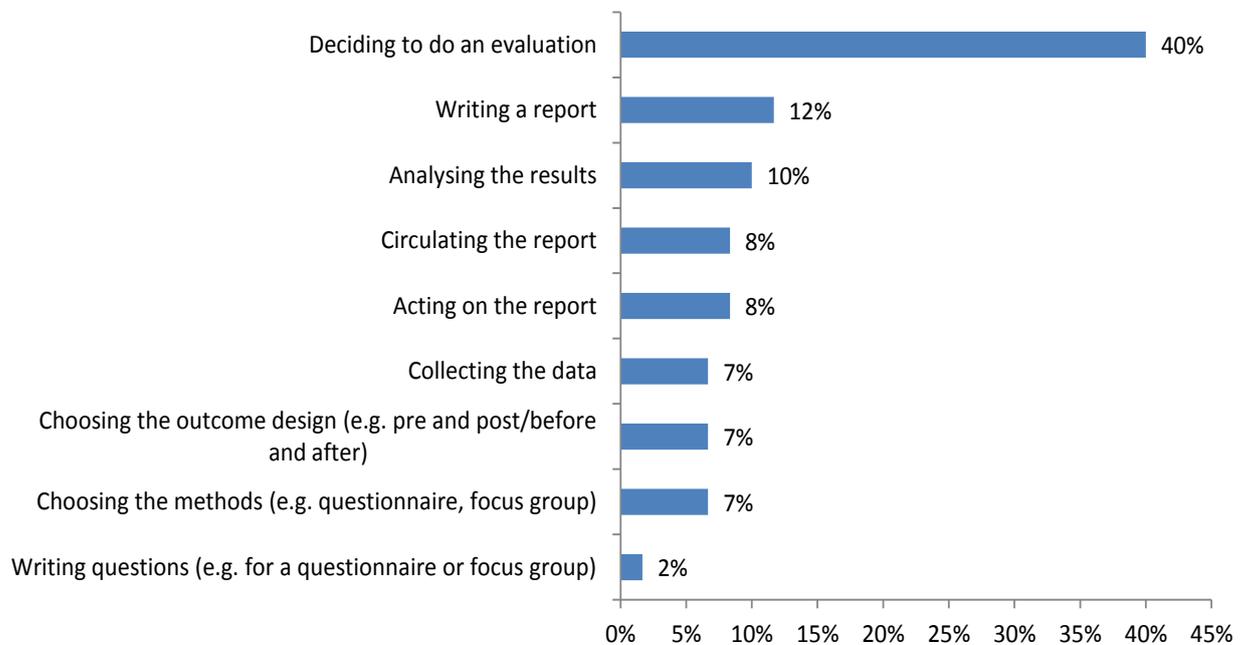
Figure 8 Least challenging part of an evaluation project (n=60)

Part	%
Deciding to do an evaluation	40%
Writing a report	12%
Analysing the results	10%
Circulating the report	8%
Acting on the report	8%
Collecting the data	7%
Choosing the outcome design (e.g. pre and post/before and after)	7%
Choosing the methods (e.g. questionnaire, focus group)	7%
Writing questions (e.g. for a questionnaire or focus group)	2%

3.3 Workplace evaluation practice

Respondents were asked to think about all of their current road safety Education, Training or Publicity (ETP) projects. Of these projects, respondents were asked to rate what proportion of them were being evaluated. This rating was not to include any projects that were only being evaluated using satisfaction surveys. The options most likely to be selected were less than half and more than half of projects were evaluated. Responses were slightly more skewed to the negative end of the scale, i.e. the number of interventions that are being evaluated is less than the number of interventions being delivered. For example, 22% said that none of their current road safety projects were being evaluated.

**Figure 9 Proportion of current road safety ETP projects being evaluated (n=60)**
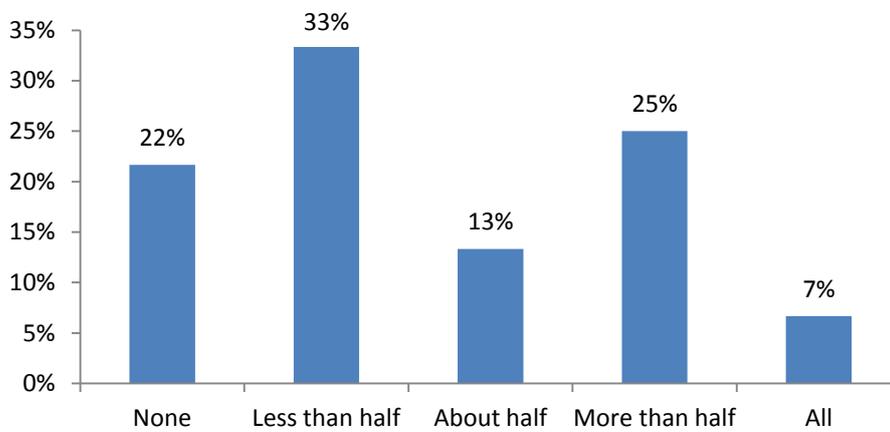
Note: Responses were not to include satisfaction surveys/happy sheets as a form of evaluation.

Those who were evaluating at least some of their current road safety projects (i.e. more than none) were asked whether the evaluation was conducted in-house or externally. The greatest proportion conducted their current evaluations in-house (54%).

Figure 10 Proportion of evaluation projects being conducted in-house or externally (n=46)
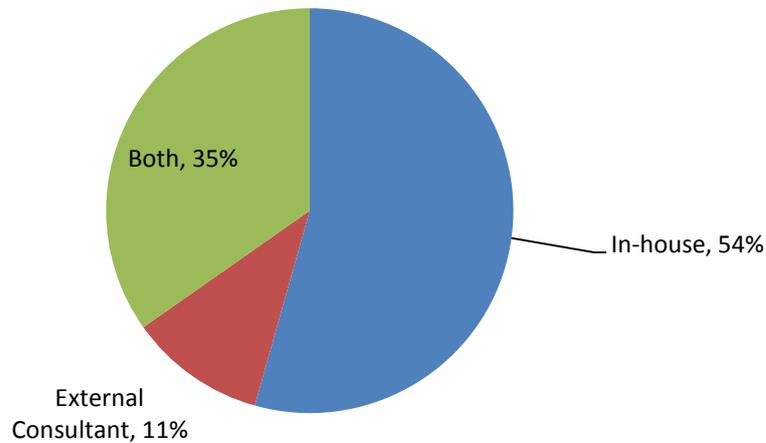
When comparing this graph with the results from the 2011 user survey, it seems there have been some changes in who conducts the evaluation projects. In 2011, evaluation projects were more likely to be conducted in-house than in 2015. In the current sample, there seems to have been a shift towards using both internal and external bodies to conduct the evaluations.

Figure 11 2011 comparison: Proportion of evaluation projects being conducted in-house or externally (n=27)
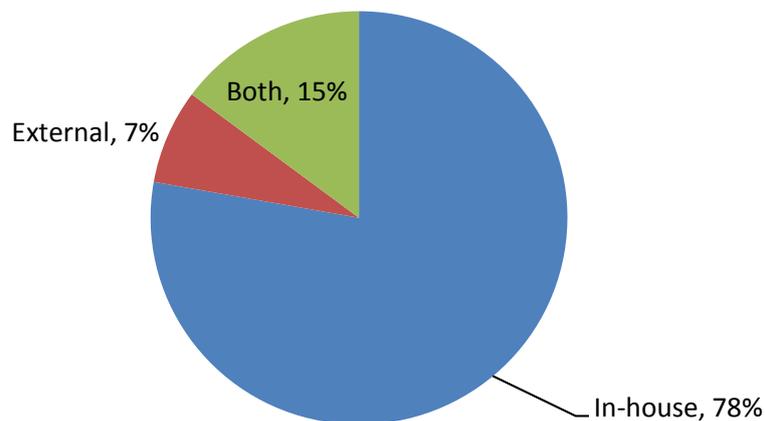
As well as assessing the current level of evaluation practice, the survey also sought information on potential barriers to evaluation. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of a set of statements, these can be seen in Figure 12. Ratings were made against a scale of 1-5, where 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important. Ratings across respondents were combined to produce a mean score.

The most important factors when considering whether to do an evaluation were the financial cost and time. The respondent's willingness, as well as their colleague's or manager's, to do evaluation were also scored as relatively important.

Figure 12 Relative importance of factors in deciding whether to conduct an evaluation

Factor	Score
Financial cost of doing an evaluation	3.9
Time needed to do an evaluation	3.9
My colleagues' willingness to do evaluation	3.5
My manager's willingness to allow me to do evaluation	3.5
My willingness to do evaluation	3.4
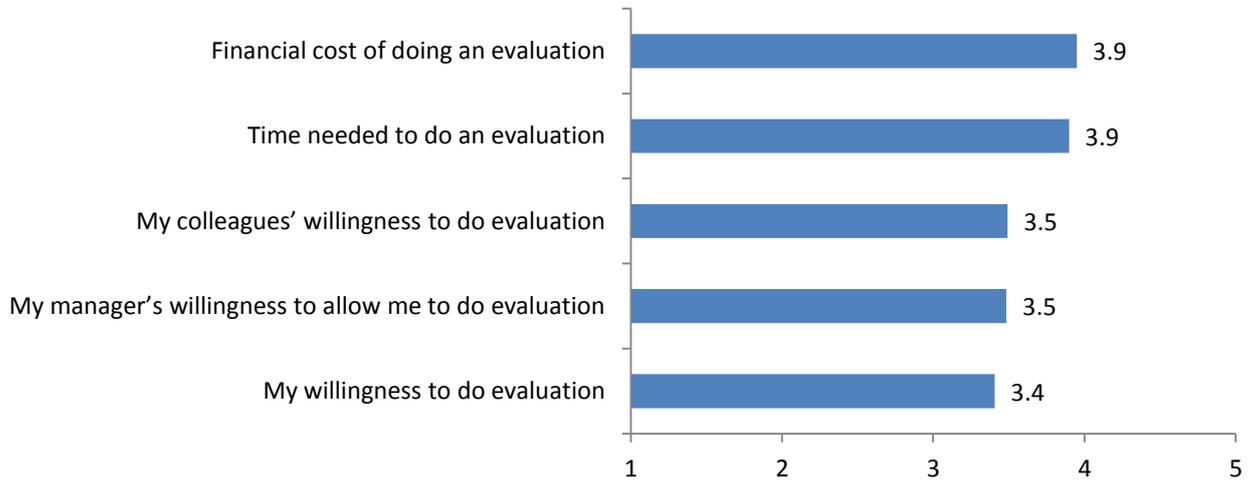
Note: 1=Not at all important, 5=Very important

3.4 Using the E-valu-it toolkit

A further section of the questionnaire sought respondents' views of the E-valu-it toolkit. Initially respondents were asked if they had created one or more projects within the Toolkit, including any they had not finished. A project in the toolkit corresponds to a self-contained evaluation project. The majority of the sample had *not* created a project within the toolkit (67%).

Figure 13 Had the user created a project within the toolkit (includes any unfinished projects)

Created a project (n=20) 33%

Not created a project (n=40) 67%
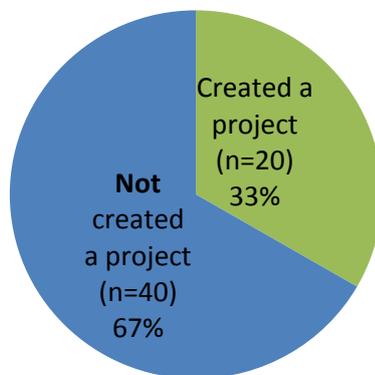
3.4.1 Those who had not created a toolkit project

Those who had not created a project in the toolkit were asked why. Most respondents either did not answer this question or wrote "I don't know" (33%). Of those who did provide an answer, not having enough time to do evaluation was the most common response. Evaluation was not a main part of their job role in all instances of those who said that they did not have enough time to do evaluation.

Figure 14 Reasons for not creating a project in the toolkit

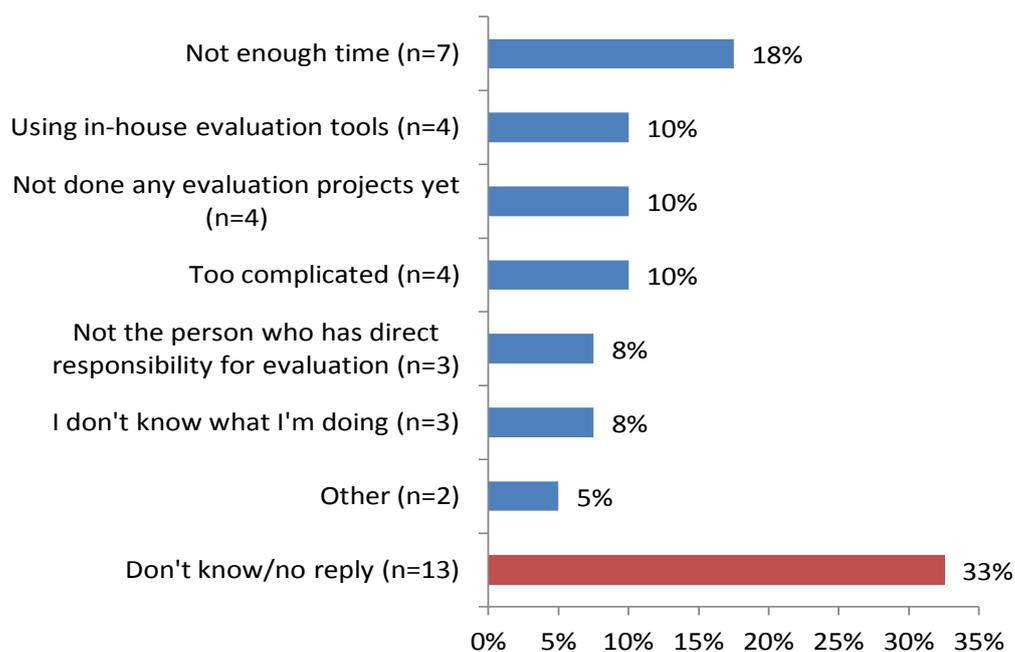

3.4.2 Those who had created a toolkit project

Of those who had started a project, 55% (n=11) had finished the project and 45% had not finished it (n=9). Four of those who had not finished the project commented that it was due to not having enough time. A further two did not find that the toolkit provided them with any useful information.

> *"Didn't find the suggestions very useful - recommendations - it all seemed a bit formulaic and going through the motions"*

Others spoke about how it was a group project and they didn't finish it collectively, how the project was put on hold or how there was a lack of resources after losing team members. Others had more positive reasons for not completing the project. One was because their project was currently in progress. The other was that the process of answering the toolkit questions made them realise that the road safety project shouldn't go ahead.

"I've found that the process of starting a project in E-valu-it quickly makes you realise that some projects shouldn't go ahead as they aren't thought out properly."

Those who had not finished a project in the toolkit were also asked at what stage they were most likely to leave an evaluation project. They were more likely to select an option which was towards the start of a project but there was little differentiation around which stage they stopped the evaluation (see Table 2).

Table 2 Stage most likely to leave an evaluation project (n=11)

	Frequency
Filling out the Toolkit questions	3
Reading your evaluation recommendations	3
Starting the evaluation	3
Finishing the evaluation	2
Writing up the evaluation	0

All those who had created a project (n=20) were also asked if they had written a report but not published it on the E-valu-it website. This was the case for three respondents. When asked why, all three respondents said that it was because it was for internal use only. One of the three respondents also said it was because they did not have time to review the report and they forgot to publish it. All three respondents said that they had not published the report elsewhere.

3.5 Help with evaluation

The final part of the survey sought to understand what type of help and support would be most valuable to E-valu-it users. The most popular option out of those provided was an evaluation guide, followed by training days.

Figure 15 What support would help respondents to use the toolkit (n=54)

An evaluation guide	70%
Evaluation training days	50%
A review service to check an item you are working on	48%
Help via email	43%
Help when making decisions	22%
Help over the telephone	19%
None	6%
Other	6%
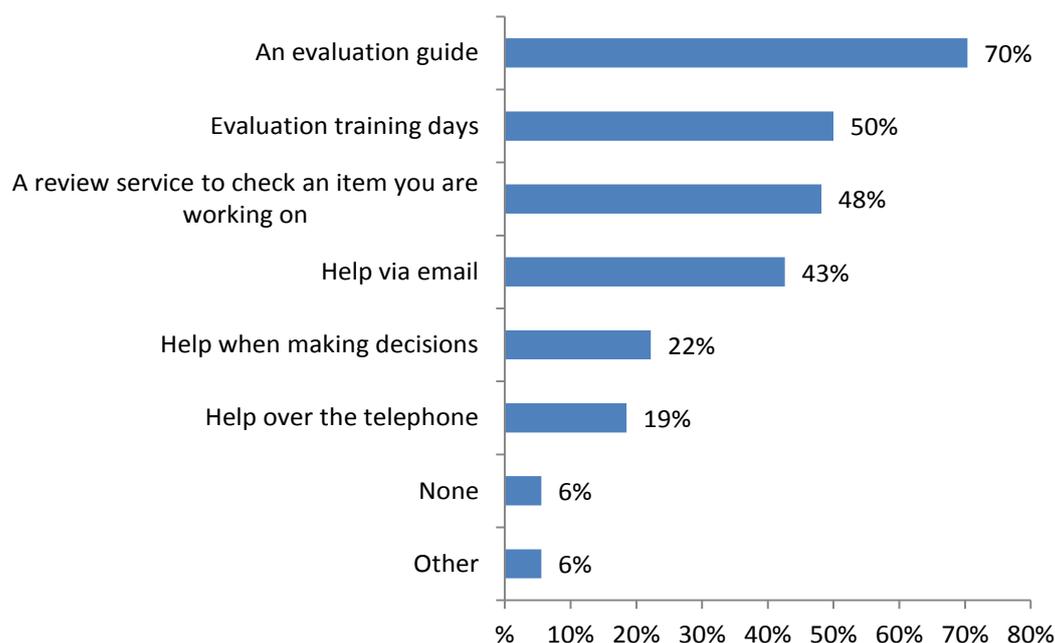
3.6 Additional comments

There was also an opportunity for respondents to leave further qualitative comments regarding E-valu-it. The running theme of these comments was that there was a motivation to evaluate, however, it was difficult to do in practice.

"Many Road Safety ETP professionals know they should evaluate effectiveness of their interventions but are either too busy, too scared of the outcomes or not fully conversant with how to evaluate effectively."

Some find the process of completing the toolkit daunting and complicated, which can be off-putting. The process gets easier for some after they have completed their first project.

"I found the toolkit quite daunting at first, but since publishing my first report, I have used it again to assist with another large evaluation and found I am becoming more confident with it"

"I am currently in the middle of an evaluation through the E-valu-it kit and I would like to see the format more user friendly. It can be daunting when you first start looking at completing the tool kit and this could put some professionals off."

4 Conclusions

4.1 Who Uses E-valu-it?

Those who use E-valu-it tend to work in a local authority. Road safety education is likely to be a part of their work. Evaluation usually takes up less than half of their job role. Most have attended an evaluation training day in the last 5 years and more than half would like to attend one in the future.

4.2 How Much Evaluation Is Taking Place?

Less than half of current road safety ETP projects are being evaluated, with almost a quarter saying that it's none at all. The majority of evaluations are still being conducted in-house, which is a continuation of the trend seen in 2011. In 2015, however, there has been a growth in the proportion of practitioners who are conducting a combination of in-house and externally lead evaluations.

4.3 Willingness To Evaluate Is Not Put Into Practice

Respondents are willing to evaluate but there are barriers working against them doing so. These include:
- Confidence and ability to evaluate (these are not as strong as willingness)
- The financial cost of doing an evaluation
- Time needed to do an evaluation

4.4 Why Aren't Toolkit Projects Completed?

Once projects are started in the toolkit the main reasons why they are not completed are because the process seems too complicated and/or users don't have time to finish the project. There was little differentiation between when, at the start of the project, respondents were most likely to leave it – between filling out the questions, reading recommendations and starting the evaluation itself.

If users had started the evaluation project then the most difficult part was choosing which outcome design to use (e.g. pre and post/before and after, use of a comparison group). Some find it easier to use the toolkit after putting their first project through it.

4.5 Additional Support

The most popular option for additional support was an evaluation guide. Other popular options included evaluation training days and a review service which would check an item that was being worked on. Review services might be most valuable at

times when users are most likely to leave the project. For example, when completing the questions and considering the recommendations.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Continuation of training workshops

Lack of confidence and ability to evaluate are one of the barriers to doing evaluation. RoSPA's evaluation training workshops have been shown to improve confidence and ability against key learning objectives[2]. Where areas have received workshops in the past, bespoke courses should be built to meet training needs.

5.2 Encourage Requests for Evaluation Support

Although workshops have been effective in improving initial confidence and ability, sustaining that momentum has proved difficult. Once practitioners start a project, they should be reminded of the support that is available from RoSPA, to help in the completion of their evaluation projects. One way to remind toolkit users may be to provide contact information at key points where respondents are likely to get stuck. These points include when completing the toolkit questions and at the recommendations stage.

Having expert support, at crucial stages of the project, could also help mitigate against resourcing issues such as time and money. For example, users find it particularly difficult to choose their outcome design. Help at this point would mean users would need to spend less time researching what design best meets their evaluation and practical needs.

5.3 Produce an Evaluation Guide

Another popular avenue for support was an evaluation guide. An evaluation guide has previously been produced by the Department for Transport[3] and there is evaluation advice on the E-valu-it website. Practitioners, however, can find that evaluation is a complicated process and are likely to be under time pressures. The advice in these sources may be too dense and/or lengthy to be useful in practice. The evaluation guide should, therefore, aim to be accessible and concise.

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[2] RoSPA (2014). *Road Safety ETP Evaluation Training: Evaluation Report.*
[3] Department for Transport (2004). *Guidelines for Evaluating Road Safety Education Interventions.*

5.4 Reorganise the Evaluation Topics Page

The evaluation topics page on the website is where users can find advice and information on how to conduct their own evaluation projects. The page has a series of links where more information can be found on certain topic areas. These links should be re-organised to align with the stages of an evaluation project, so users can identify where they should focus their attention. These stages should align themselves with those set out in the evaluation guide. Menu options should also try to avoid the use of evaluation jargon terms as those looking for help may not know the official term for the information they are looking for.

6   Appendix

Survey: Road Safety Evaluation using the E-valu-it Toolkit

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather your views on the Road Safety E-valu-it Toolkit and road safety evaluation more generally. It should take around <u>10-15 minutes</u> to complete. If you have not visited the site for a while, it might be useful to visit it to remind yourself before completing this questionnaire. www.roadsafetyevaluation.com

Responses to this survey are anonymous and your data will only be used to help inform the development of E-valu-it. Your feedback is very important in helping us improve the website and to understand how we can best help users to complete evaluation projects. If you have any questions about this survey please contact: cbrown@rospa.com

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Section 1: About you

The first section of the survey is to get some insight into your own experience of Road Safety Evaluation. By evaluation we mean a systematic way of judging something's merit or worth and seeing if any improvements can be made. This includes things like doing a questionnaire or holding a focus group to understand what the audience took away from a road safety education, training or publicity event.

1.1.   How much of your job role is taken up by evaluation?
- ❑ All of my job role
- ❑ More than half
- ❑ About half
- ❑ Less than half
- ❑ None of my job role

1.2.   Have you attended an evaluation training day within the last 5 years?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

Section 1: About you

1.3.   Would you like to attend an evaluation training day in the future?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No Go to Q1.5.a

1.4.   How much would the cost of an evaluation training day influence a decision for you to attend one?
- ❑ It would be deciding factor
- ❑ It would be a factor but other factors would also be important
- ❑ It would not make any difference to the decision

Section 1: About you

1.5. **Now thinking about your own knowledge and skills, please rate yourself on each of the areas below:**

	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high
Ability to plan an evaluation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Ability to advise others on how to evaluate	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Willingness to evaluate	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Confidence to evaluate	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Section 1: About you

Which part of an evaluation project do you find the most and least challenging? Please select one item for most challenging and one for least challenging from the drop-down boxes below.

1.6. **Most challenging part of evaluation**
- ❑ Deciding to do an evaluation
- ❑ Choosing the outcome design (e.g. pre and post/before and after)
- ❑ Choosing the methods (e.g. questionnaire, focus group)
- ❑ Writing questions (e.g. for a questionnaire or focus group)
- ❑ Collecting the data
- ❑ Analysing the results
- ❑ Writing a report
- ❑ Circulating the report
- ❑ Acting on the report

1.7. **Least challenging part of evaluation**
- ❑ Deciding to do an evaluation
- ❑ Choosing the outcome design (e.g. pre and post/before and after)
- ❑ Choosing the methods (e.g. questionnaire, focus group)
- ❑ Writing questions (e.g. for a questionnaire or focus group)
- ❑ Collecting the data
- ❑ Analysing the results
- ❑ Writing a report
- ❑ Circulating the report
- ❑ Acting on the report

Section 2: About your work

2.1. **How many of your current road safety projects, in Education, Training or Publicity, are being evaluated?** (Please do not include those only being evaluated using 'happy sheets'/satisfaction surveys)
- ❑ None   Go to q2.3
- ❑ Less than half
- ❑ About half
- ❑ More than half
- ❑ All

2.2. **Are the evaluations conducted in-house or by an external consultant?**
- ❑ In-house
- ❑ External Consultant
- ❑ Both

Section 2: About your work

2.3. **How important are the following factors in deciding whether you do an evaluation project?**

	Not at all important	Not important	Neutral	Important	Very important
Time needed to do an evaluation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Financial cost of doing an evaluation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
My willingness to do evaluation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
My **manager's** willingness to allow me to do evaluation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
My **colleagues'** willingness to do evaluation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Section 3: Using the toolkit

3.1. **Have you created one or more projects within the E-valu-it Toolkit?** This includes any projects you have started, even if you have not finished them.
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

3.2. **Why haven't you created a project in the Toolkit?**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Section 3: Using the toolkit

3.3. **Have you ever started a project in the E-valu-it Toolkit and not finished it?**
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

3.4. **Why didn't you finish the project?**

_____
_____
_____
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_____
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_____
_____
_____
_____

3.5. **At what stage are you most likely to leave a Toolkit project and not come back to it?**
Please select <u>one</u> option.
- ❑ Filling out the Toolkit questions
- ❑ Reading your evaluation recommendations
- ❑ Starting the evaluation
- ❑ Finishing the evaluation
- ❑ Writing up the evaluation

Section 3: Using the toolkit

3.6. **Have you ever written an evaluation report using the Toolkit and <u>not published</u> it on the E-valu-it website?**
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No Go to N4.1

3.7. **Why didn't you publish the report on the E-valu-it website?** You may select more than one option.
- ❑ It was for internal use only
- ❑ Concerned that it could contain confidential information
- ❑ Didn't think anyone else could learn from it
- ❑ Unsure if I'd done it correctly
- ❑ Didn't have time to review the report
- ❑ Forgot to publish it
- ❑ Manager or funder of the project refused to publish
- ❑ Other - please specify below

_____
_____

3.8. **Did you publish the report somewhere other than the E-valu-it website?**
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No Go to Q4.1

3.9. **Where did you publish the report?**

_____
_____
_____

Section 4: Additional support

4.1. **What kind of additional FREE support would help you to use the E-valu-it Toolkit?** You may select more than one option.
- ❑ Evaluation training days
- ❑ Help over the telephone
- ❑ Help via email
- ❑ A review service to check an item you are working on (e.g. aims and objectives, a questionnaire, your evaluation report)
- ❑ An evaluation guide
- ❑ Help when making decisions
- ❑ Other - please specify below

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Section 5: Demographics and final comments

5.1. **Which type of organisation are you employed by?** Please select one option
- ❑ Local Authority
- ❑ Central Government
- ❑ Emergency Service
- ❑ Commercial Company
- ❑ University
- ❑ Charity
- ❑ Non-governmental organisation
- ❑ Other - please specify

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5.2. **Which specialism best describes your job role?** You may select more than one option if necessary
- ❑ Research and/or Evaluation
- ❑ Road Safety Education
- ❑ Road Safety Publicity
- ❑ Driver Training
- ❑ Motorcycle Training
- ❑ Cycle Training
- ❑ Road Safety Engineering
- ❑ Vehicle Engineering
- ❑ Road Safety Audit
- ❑ Work Related Road Safety
- ❑ Road Safety Policy Development
- ❑ Road Safety Campaigning or Lobbying
- ❑ Traffic Enforcement
- ❑ Statistician
- ❑ Other - please specify

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5.3. **Do you have any further comments that you would like to make about the E-valu-it Toolkit or RoadSafetyEvaluation.com?**

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