SUMMARY
This Interim Advice Note supersedes the guidance provided previously (IAN 49/03) regarding the use of warning signs in connection with the skid resistance of new asphalt surfaces.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE
This IAN must be adopted on all existing contracts, and should be included in new contracts.
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Thin surfacings are now the preferred choice of surface course for trunk roads. For technical reasons, the initial bitumen film on thin surfacings is thicker than on other, previously used, surfacings and may take longer to wear away. While it is present, the bitumen coating on new asphalt surfaces may lead to a reduction in tyre/road friction and an associated increased risk of accidents in some situations. The increased use of thin surfacings has therefore led to greater awareness of “early-life skid resistance”.

1.2 In March 2003, HA introduced IAN 49/03; it addressed potential increased skidding risks on new asphalt surfaces emerging from anecdotal comment and early phases of research. It introduced the use of warning signs to help manage the perceived risks on newly-resurfaced roads, pending findings from further research.

1.3 That research has now been completed and has shown that, while some increase in accident risk does occur on new asphalt surfacings, it is relevant to all material types (not just thin surfacings) and has always existed. The overall increase in accident numbers while surfacings are new (typically <6 months) is accompanied by a significant decrease in the number of fatal accidents. The increase in risk tends to occur on low-risk sites, not high-risk areas as had previously been envisaged.

1.4 These findings have provided the basis for a substantive review of the advice given in IAN 49/03. The actual risks are smaller and different to those envisaged when IAN 49/03 was developed and options for mitigation are limited and would not be cost-effective. The actions proposed by IAN 49/03 are not appropriate so this IAN supersedes the earlier advice by withdrawing the use of warning signs.

IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 This IAN must be adopted on all existing contracts, and should be included as part of new contracts or schemes.

REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Slippery Road Warning signs (Diagram 557, Traffic Signs manual, Chapter 4) with an appropriate supplementary plate (Diagram 570) to cover the extent of the new surfacing should not be erected at any newly resurfaced sites (with the exception of Clause 3.2) where the surfacing laid complies with the contract specification.

3.2 In the circumstance of an interim thin wearing course repair where a significant differential in material types exists between adjacent sections of the pavement, e.g. high friction surfacing, slippery road signs should continue to be used until such time as the section has been fully reinstated.

3.3 Any signs erected in accordance with IAN 49/03 and still on the network should be removed immediately.

3.4 Because of the requirements at Clause 3.1 there is no need to submit forms recording their use to the Trunk Road Agent or Network Management Team.
3.5 The Welsh Government will no longer undertake audits relating to the implementation of IAN 49/03.

4 CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Questions on this Interim Advice Note should be submitted to the Standards Feedback and Enquiries email box:

Standards_Feedback_and_Enquiries@wales.gsi.gov.uk

5. INFORMATIVE REFERENCES

5.1 The following documents provide further background information to the advice contained within this IAN. All documents can be accessed via the Highways Agency knowledge compendium at www.highways.gov.uk: