



DRAGON-SHIELD

DRAGON-Shield Launch Event

On 21st September 2023, we launched DRAGON-Shield during an online event hosted by [the National Working Group Network](https://nwgnetwork.org/) [https://nwgnetwork.org/]. During this event, attendees were introduced to [Project DRAGON-S \(Developing Resistance Against Grooming Online – Spotter and Shield\)](https://www.swansea.ac.uk/project-dragon-s/) [https://www.swansea.ac.uk/project-dragon-s/], an interdisciplinary research project funded primarily by [the Safe Online Initiative at End Violence](https://www.end-violence.org/safe-online) [https://www.end-violence.org/safe-online], and were given insight into the results of the pilot and evaluation conducted on DRAGON-Shield. Below is an overview to our event and the questions the project team were asked as part of it.

What is DRAGON-Shield and how does it work?

DRAGON-Shield is an online interactive, multi-media training platform that is designed for practitioners to use in their own time around their work. It utilises real-world examples from online grooming conversations, video explainers and interactive quizzes to relay specialist knowledge to child safeguarding practitioners about online child sexual grooming.

The training platform consists of four phases:

- **Phase 1: Overview** provides practitioners with an understanding of online grooming as communication, including an insight into how children and groomers use language during online grooming interactions.
- **Phase 2: Groomer Tactics** explores the communication tactics used by groomers to ensnare and entrap a child.
- **Phase 3: Conversation Simulator** enables practitioners to gain “first-hand” experience of what children encounter during an online grooming interaction via a real-time conversation simulation from a child’s perspective.

- **Phase 4: Assessment and Resources** provides practitioners with a downloadable completion certificate to evidence their professional development and a resource pack filled with activities that practitioners can use with children to educate them about the risks of online child sexual grooming.

In addition to specialist knowledge, through the DRAGON-Shield training platform, practitioners have access to a collaborative user wellbeing library to protect and maintain their mental health when completing the training and/or working on instances online child sexual grooming.

What did the pilot and evaluation find?

The pilot and evaluation took place across four sites (Wales, England, Australia and New Zealand) over a 9-month period (November 2022 – July 2023). We discovered that training around online child sexual grooming – particularly around how communication works in these contexts – is inconsistent, leading to practitioners reporting a lack of confidence in applying their training to real-world contexts. However, after completing the training, 100% of participants felt more knowledgeable about how communication works in online child sexual grooming conversations and felt more confident using their knowledge to work with those affected by online child sexual grooming. This led to 100% of participants stating that they would recommend the training to other child safeguarding practitioners.

What's next for DRAGON-Shield?

The project team are looking to roll-out the DRAGON-Shield training platform in 2024. We are currently looking for expressions of interest for those who would like to be notified of when this training goes live here: https://swanseasom.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Gqg4FWTmUtxkSG.

You can also find out more about the work underpinning DRAGON-Shield in the new publication from Prof. Nuria Lorenzo-Dus, Craig Evans and Ruth Mullineux-Morgan, "[Online Child Sexual Grooming Discourse](https://www.cambridge.org/core/elements/online-child-sexual-grooming-discourse/681DF61413676C11CC493C168C01C9F0)" [<https://www.cambridge.org/core/elements/online-child-sexual-grooming-discourse/681DF61413676C11CC493C168C01C9F0>], published by Cambridge Elements in Forensic Linguistics.

If I have any further questions, is there anyone I can email?

Of course! You can get in touch with the project team at Project.DRAGONS@swansea.ac.uk. You can also find out more about the project at our website: <https://www.swansea.ac.uk/project-dragon-s> and via our social media: https://twitter.com/ProjectDragon_s and <https://www.linkedin.com/company/project-dragon-s>.



DRAGON

DEVELOPING RESISTANCE
AGAINST GROOMING ONLINE



End Violence
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