

Institution: University of Kent		
Unit of Assessment: 23: Education		
Title of case study: Keeping Children Safe: Advancing Child Protection Pedagogy, Awareness, and Practice Internationally through Innovative Simulations		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken 2011-2018		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Jane Reeves	Professor of Teaching, Learning and Innovation, Co-Director of the Centre for Child Protection	2011-2020
David Shemmings	Professor of Social Work Research, Co-Director of the Centre for Child Protection	2011-2019
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Through a suite of interactive, innovative child protection simulations, the Centre for Child Protection (CCP) at the University of Kent has been keeping children safe by educating social workers, educational professionals, and young people in the UK and beyond. More than 14,000 social workers have improved their courtroom skills, enabling them to more effectively represent neglected and abused children. Over 6,000 educators have gained knowledge about how to prevent young people from being radicalised and groomed, and taught hundreds of thousands of children using the simulation. 278,000 people used the simulations to learn to identify risks of sexual exploitation, contributing to a 10% decrease in calls to Childline counsellors on this topic.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
Background		
<p>In 2012, child protection experts Professors Reeves and Shemmings established the University of Kent's Centre for Child Protection (CCP) as an inter-professional Centre of Excellence. From 2013, the Centre has been commissioned by numerous key child protection stakeholders, such as Kent Police, NHS, Innovate UK, and the Home Office, to develop immersive simulation training suites to improve knowledge and practice around complex inter-professional issues including sexual abuse, neglect, radicalisation and extremism, and sexual exploitation. Through close partnerships with these stakeholders, the Centre has acquired unique access to classified information, unpublished research, and case studies, whilst also assimilating further significant material from secondary data, inter-professional data sets, and focus groups with young people [R1-R6]. The simulations are underpinned by this distinctive research base, which informed and helped to better determine the simulations' associated scripts, training manuals, language, and format [R1-R6].</p>		
Research and Development		
<p>In 2011, the University of Kent dedicated £16,000 to fund a prototype simulation on child</p>		

abuse entitled 'Rosie1', based on gaming technology to identify a more effective, interactive method of training for child protection workers [R1]. Rosie1 was developed and then tested with over 1,700 stakeholders in statutory and voluntary agencies. This game-based, simulation method has been used in developing further simulations. In 2012, user feedback and evaluation findings on Rosie1 were used to develop Rosie2, the first inter-professional training simulation on neglect [R1]. The development of Rosie2 provided an innovative opportunity to evaluate child protection training using eye-tracker and facial reading software. This ground-breaking research found: a) that professionals unconsciously feel 'disgust' and 'sadness' regarding the neglected families; b) evidence of compassion fatigue; and c) the negative implications for social care professionals working with families if the former two issues were not dealt with effectively through supervision [R2]. In recognition of our pioneering approach to training, in 2016 the Children and Family Court Advisory Service (Cafcass) commissioned (£50,000) a simulation to support the development of family courtroom skills in England: 'Rosie myCourtroom'. Through primary research and secondary data analysis, we identified key areas of anxiety for practitioners working in family courts, such as the processes of cross-examination and challenging evidence. Based on these findings, we developed content for Rosie myCourtroom that targeted those particular learning outcomes, and thereby improved child protection workers' courtroom knowledge and practice [R1, R3].

Concurrently, in 2013, Kent Police and Kent County Council funded (£30,000) the development of a social-media-style interactive simulation on online grooming for young people on radicalisation, as research from Special Branch indicated that the Prevent Agenda (2006 Government counter-terrorism strategy) was not being addressed in schools [R4]. We designed the learning tool, 'Zak', to train education professionals and young people on the topics of extremism, radicalisation, and internet safety [R5]. Our own work and engagement with key stakeholders had also established these areas as under-represented in the educational sector [R4]. In 2014, as a response to National Serious Case Reviews on the extent of child sexual exploitation (CSE) across the UK, the NHS funded the development of a (fourth) simulation, 'Lottie' [R5]. The National Serious Case Reviews highlighted misunderstandings of grooming. We built on that evidence in the development of Lottie to increase understanding of how to stay safe on and offline [R5]. In 2016, we expanded the growing portfolio of simulations with the development of 'Behind Closed Doors' (BCD), funded by the Innovate UK Prevent Innovation Fund and the Home Office (£99,000). BCD targets particular elements of radicalisation, specifically girls travelling to Syria and an increase in right-wing extremism [R5]. Then, in 2017, we demonstrated that, by promoting discussion and critical thinking around the complexities of grooming, the Zak, Lottie, and BCD simulations were changing young people's online behaviour [R6].

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

University of Kent researchers are indicated in bold (other authors indicate collaborations with Cafcass and Kent Police).

[R1] **Reeves, J.**, and **Shemmings, D.** (2011, 2012, 2016). Rosie Child Protection Pack; Rosie1 prototype, Rosie2 and myCourtroom. See the PowerPoint demonstration on the Rosie Suite here: <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/85721/>

[R2] **Reeves, J.**, Drew, I., **Shemmings, D.**, and Ferguson, H. (2015). "Rosie2" – a child protection simulation; Perspectives on neglect and the "unconscious at work". *Child Abuse Review*, 24(5): 246-265. <https://doi.org/10.1002/car.2362>

[R3] **Reeves J.**, Green, T., Marsden, L., and Shaw, N. (2017). 'myCourtroom: Rosie's family go to court; the use of simulations in preparing social workers for court'. *Social Work Education*, 27(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2017.1391772>

[R4] **Reeves, J.**, Soutar, E., Green, S., and Crowther, T. (2017). 'Children and young people's vulnerabilities to being groomed; what can be done?'. In S. Çetinkaya (ed.), *Contemporary Childhood*. InTech. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.71672>

[R5] Reeves, J., and Shemmings, D. (2013, 2014, 2016). Grooming Simulation Pack: *Zak, Looking out for Lottie and Behind Closed Doors*. See PowerPoint demonstration of the grooming suite of simulations: <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/85722/>

[R6] Reeves, J., and Sheriyar, A. (2015). 'Addressing Radicalisation into the Classroom: A New Approach to Teacher and Pupil Learning'. *Journal of Education and Training*, 2(2): 20-38. <https://doi.org/10.5296/jet.v2i2.7129>

Key Grants and Awards

Since 2011, the Centre for Child Protection has received a total of £1,426,741 to support this research, and received various awards, including, the University CATE Award (2017) and the Guardian Digital Innovation Award (2016); and commendations (Kent Police, 2015) for its research and impact with the simulations.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Since **2014**, the Centre for Child Protection has worked closely with numerous key child protection stakeholders, including Save the Children, the Home Office, NSPCC (Childline), Department of Education, Local Authorities, Police Services, Counter-Terrorism Unit, and the National Health Service. Through these partnerships, the Centre has improved child protection knowledge, pedagogy, and practice via development and dissemination of their research-based simulations. The Centre has achieved an international reputation as a hub of child protection excellence. For example, the Department for Child Protection of South Australia has incorporated Rosie2 into a full-day, contextualised professional development training event for their staff.

Anna Clark, the Principal Social Worker of South Australia said: 'The Rosie2 simulation allows practitioners to experience a realistic home visit conducted virtually, including preparation for the home visit, assessment of the home environment and decision making process following the home visit. This is intended to replicate what happens in the field [which has not] previously be[en] recreated. [The simulation] provides an opportunity for practitioners to consider risk and harm factors for a child or young person, as well as analyse the decision making processes' [a]. In the UK in **2018**, Lottie was featured on NSPCC's Childline website as part of a five-week campaign on healthy relationships. 278,000 people interacted with the Lottie simulation, contributing to a 10% decrease in calls to Childline about relationships [b].

Below we demonstrate the significance and reach of the Centre's work across the sector, with examples of some of its most significant impact.

Advancing Child Protection Practitioners' Knowledge and Practice

The Centre's simulations have contributed to the professional development, knowledge, and practice of educational and social-care practitioners across the UK [c]. For example, since **August 2013**, the Centre has sold 8,762 licences for Rosie2 and Rosie *myCourtroom*, and reached a further 6,000 stakeholders through the freely downloadable Rosie1 [Table 1, d]. Training delegates highlighted the simulations as: 'really helpful in prompting discussion around practice challenges and what it might be like from a child/family viewpoint' [c]. A Senior Learning and Development Commissioning Officer for Surrey Children's Services Academy (SCSA), which has employed the simulations since **2019**, said that the simulation helps them to 'reach large numbers of practitioners across a wide geographical area', has 'given practitioners an opportunity to consider how they can best achieve change for children and families', and 'revisit academic learning, social work methods and theories underpinning their work' [e].

Informing Workplace Planning, Practice and Opportunity

In the UK, the simulations also have informed workforce planning and capacity across the

sector. Official statistics from the Department for Education in England alone show that there is a 16% turnover rate among child and family social workers working in local authorities in England, with 6,000 vacancies in 2019. A third of this workforce had less than two years' experience, and nearly 60% had less than five years' experience (Official statistics: Children and Family Social Work Workforce in England, Department for Education, 27 February 2020). Thus, there is an urgent need for high-quality training of new child and family social workers. The Centre's simulations help ensure that the professionals working in local authorities have the necessary skills to protect children who have experienced neglect or abuse. For example, Rosie2 has been used for the recruitment and comprehensive training of practitioners with the Surrey Children's Services Academy (SCSA) (**2019-present**), Devon Council (**2015-present**), Kirklees Council (**2014-present**), and Barnet Council (**2016-present**) [d]. Most recently, the SCSA acknowledged the particular value of the simulations during the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, when 'the lack of statutory placements can mean qualified social workers haven't always had as broad range of experience as they require, simulations support this and give them an opportunity to develop skills in a safe environment' [e].

Internationally, since **2015**, Denmark Metropol University, the University of South Australia, and the Department for Children's Protection (DCP; Australia) all use Rosie2 to train social-work students and social workers [f, a]. A Program Director at the University of South Australia explained: 'As a result of the discipline's association with the Centre, there has been an emergence of a community of practice with an interest in the development and evaluation of simulations', and 'The use of Rosie2 has resulted [...] in improved student satisfaction rate [...] and has opened up opportunities to work in partnership with Aboriginal leaders to explore the use of simulations in areas of child protection and mental health' [f]. Similarly, a collaboration between Professor Reeves, the University of South Australia, and the South Australia Department for Children's Protection resulted in the development of a CPD course, 'Rosie Safe', to enhance qualified social workers' capabilities for undertaking child safety assessments. About this course, South Australia's Principal Social Worker asserts that they have received 'consistently positive feedback about the benefits of being able to use a realistic simulation', with practitioners highlighting consistently that 'this training should be compulsory for all staff who are conducting home visits, investigations and completing safety assessments and safety plans' [a].

Influencing Child Protection Pedagogy and Heightening Young People's Awareness

Through dissemination of the simulations in schools and with educational professionals, the Centre for Child Protection has influenced child protection pedagogy. In secondary education, for example, CCP has trained over 2,465 professionals on the 'Grooming suite' simulations (Zak, Lottie, and BCD) since **August 2013**. 6,370 licences (including renewals) have been sold, which enable trainers to use the simulation with an unlimited number of children, parents, or other professionals during a single year [Table 2, d]. Assuming each trainer reaches between 20 and 100 students, we conservatively estimate that between 127,000 and 637,000 children have been taught [Table 2, d]. A **2017** survey of 146 educators who were trained using Zak and Lottie revealed that between 60% and 95% of them (depending upon school type) had increased their own knowledge of grooming; between 52% and 95% had increased their own knowledge of radicalisation; and, between 27% and 59% had recommended changes to their organisation's safeguarding policy since being trained [Table 3, g]. Of the 98 educators who had also used the simulation with young people, '94% believed that their students' knowledge [of internet safety] and awareness [of grooming] had increased' [g]. One trainee stated: 'It has made students think about the choices they make', and 'made them think more closely about the possible impact of their actions' [g].

Moreover, since **2019**, the BCD simulation has been implemented in priority-risk areas by the Home Office in 'train-the-trainer' sessions with Prevent Education Officers (PEOs) across the UK, with 301 professionals directly trained. An assistant head teacher described BCD as 'One of the most useful and professional resources I have come across' [h]. These PEOs intended to use training licences with other staff, parents, and young people of varying ages [h].

The Lottie simulation was viewed by 278,000 people during a five-week 2018 NSPCC Childline campaign. While there was an increase in calls to Childline during the campaign, there was a 10% decrease in calls about healthy relationships, suggesting that Lottie may have answered children's questions without the need for individual conversations with a counsellor [b].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[a] Questionnaire and email: Principal Social Worker, Department for Children's Protection (South Australia).

[b] Report and emails: data on Lottie usage from NSPCC, Autumn 2018.

[c] Published, peer-reviewed report. Evaluation data reported in [R2].

[d] Report: Licence figures and uptake data report, August 2013-July 2020.

[e] Email: Senior Learning and Development Commissioning Officer, Surrey Children's Services Academy (SCSA).

[f] Testimonial: Program Director, University of South Australia.

[g] Published, peer-reviewed report: Reeves, J., and Crowther, T. (2019). 'Teacher feedback on the use of innovative social media simulations to enhance critical thinking in young people on radicalisation, extremism, sexual exploitation and grooming'. *Pastoral Care in Education*. See pp. 289 and 292.

[h] Report: Home Office BCD Report.