

Institution: University of Salford		
Unit of Assessment: 13		
Title of case study: Ensuring the safety, security and wellbeing of students through human-centred design		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: January 2015 – June 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:
Prof. Caroline L. Davey	Professor of Design, Innovation & Society	August 1999 – Present
Andrew B. Wootton	Senior Research Fellow	January 2004 – Present
Dr Melissa Marselle	Research Fellow	January 2015 – February 2017
Period when the claimed impact occurred: January 2015 – December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>University students are vulnerable to a range of security and welfare risks. However, measures taken to mitigate such risks vary widely between institutions and the higher education (HE) sector's approach to student wellbeing is fragmented. Research at Salford to understand, model and reframe UK university practice led to the design and development of a novel, student-centred approach: ProtectED. This is the first Code of Practice and accreditation scheme to comprehensively address student safety, security and wellbeing. Spun out of the University as a not-for-profit Community Interest Company (CIC) in 2018, ProtectED currently enables six founder member universities to implement good practice and apply an integrated approach to safeguarding the wellbeing of approximately 165,000 students. This includes tackling sexual misconduct, reducing crime and better supporting mental health. ProtectED's award-winning transformational, evidence-based approach to addressing student security is recognised by the professional security sector and has impacted the thinking and work of the government regulator of the UK security industry, commercial security companies, university security professionals, and British Council HE representatives among others.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Since 2000, Davey and Wootton's human-centred design research has supported practitioners and policymakers (urban designers, planners, local authorities, police and service providers) to gain insight into complex challenges, 're-frame' problems and develop solutions for improving crime prevention, urban safety and wellbeing [3.1, 3.2].</p> <p>The human-centred approach is 'bottom-up', aiming to understand the roles, requirements, abilities and limitations of the humans within a design system, be that a place, a service or a product. Insight from this process leads to improved conceptualisation of problems and in turn to the design of innovative solutions that are nevertheless feasible [3.1, 3.2]. Davey and Wootton's design approach is detailed in their book <i>'Design Against Crime'</i> [3.1], published in the seminal <i>Design for Social Responsibility</i> series. The value of the approach to policy and practice across Europe is detailed in the refereed conference proceedings of the <i>European Academy of Design</i> [3.2].</p>		

In 2015, Wootton and Davey initiated a collaboration with two security professionals on the improvement of security practice in higher education (HE). Drawing on industry networks, a panel of individuals drawn from key stakeholder organisations was established to advise, assist and inform the research and design process [3.3].

Research was conducted by Marselle, Wootton and Davey across England and Wales [3.4, **Introduction & Overview, p. 8**]. This enabled development of a comprehensive conceptual model of the safety, security and wellbeing issues facing higher education institutions (HEIs), students and their parents. Findings were invited to be published by the Deutscher Präventionstag (DPT) — the largest crime prevention conference in Europe [3.3]. Analysis of the research revealed students are at higher risk of crime victimisation than the general population, due to a range of factors, including age, type of accommodation and life-style. A national survey conducted in partnership with the National Union of Students (NUS) (n=876) revealed a range of mental health issues facing the 18 to 24-year-old age group [3.3]. Focus group research with security staff, police officers and student services staff across England and Wales revealed the fragmented and unregulated nature of service provision, with standards of safety, security and welfare services varying significantly between institutions [3.3]. The difficulty in differentiating between universities implementing good practice and those delivering poor service was evident.

The ProtectED membership and accreditation concept was designed to support communication of an institution's commitment to student safety, security and wellbeing, as well as improve implementation of minimum standards across the sector [3.3, 3.4 **Introduction & Overview, p. 8**]. Findings from qualitative focus group research challenged traditional conceptions of university security as 'manned guarding' and 'key holding', and highlighted a broader safeguarding role requiring 'softer', more interpersonal skills. University security staff are often the first to respond to student mental health issues as they usually work 24/7, including late evenings and weekends when crises are likely to occur [3.3, 3.4 **Introduction & Overview, p. 8**]. Indeed, security staff identified 'student welfare' as the second most common issue they faced and discussed providing pastoral care to students. Analysis of research findings enabled the conceptualisation and design of a holistic approach for universities to more effectively address student safety, security and wellbeing. The ProtectED concept and structure were tested through prototyping workshops with industry stakeholders (the ProtectED Advisory Board) and content developed and validated with subject area experts [3.5].

The ProtectED Code of Practice [3.4] covers a number of issues, from core institutional security, through student wellbeing and mental health, to student harassment and sexual assault [3.5] and the student night out. Safety and wellbeing issues are considered in relation to the entire student experience, both on- and off-campus [3.4 **Introduction & Overview, p. 15, 3.5**]. Central to ProtectED is partnership working, both internally within the institution and externally with relevant agencies and partner organisations [3.4 **Introduction & Overview, p. 14**].

3. References to the research

3.1. Davey, C.L. & Wootton, A.B. (2016) Design Against Crime. A Human-Centred Approach to Designing for Safety and Security, *Design for Social Responsibility Series*, Cooper, R. (Ed.) Routledge: Abingdon, Oxon. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315576565> (REF2)

3.2. Wootton, A. B. & Davey, C.L. (2016) The value of design research in improving crime prevention policy and practice, *11th European Academy of Design Conference*, Paris, 22 - 24 April 2015. Refereed conference proceedings (copy available on request)

3.3. Davey, C.L., Wootton, A.B. & Marselle, M.R. (2016) ProtectED: Valuing the safety, security & wellbeing of university students, *International Perspectives of Crime Prevention 8: Invited papers from 20th Deutscher Präventionstag (DPT), Annual International Forum (AIF)*, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 8 – 9 June 2015, pp. 79-94. Available at: <https://www.praeventionstag.de/dokumentation/download.cms?id=2412>

3.4. Wootton, A.B., Marselle, M.R., Davey, C.L., Nuttall, B. & Jones, T. (2017), ProtectED Code of Practice: Ensuring the Safety, Security & Wellbeing of HEI Students & Assets, University of Salford: Salford. ISBN 978-1-907842-91-7. Available at: www.protect-ed.org/resources

3.5. Wootton, A.B., Davey, C.L. & Winrow, L. (2019) Protecting students from harassment and sexual assault: A human-centred design approach, *International Perspectives of Crime Prevention 10, invited papers from 22nd Deutscher Präventionstag (DPT), Annual International Forum (AIF)*, Hannover, Germany, 19 – 20 June 2017, pp. 79-106. Available at: <https://www.praeventionstag.de/dokumentation/download.cms?id=2894>

4. Details of the impact

ProtectED development research began in January 2015 and identified that the provision of security and student support services in UK universities is fragmented in terms of both service quality and scope. ProtectED was subsequently spun out of the University of Salford as a not-for-profit *Community Interest Company* (CIC) in October 2018 and is the **first university membership-based HE sector accreditation scheme** to comprehensively address student safety, security and wellbeing across the whole university experience [see 3.4].

Sustained by membership fees, six universities had joined as ProtectED [Founder Member institutions](#) as of December 2020: [Brunel University London](#); [Coventry University](#); [Teesside University](#); [University College London \(UCL\)](#); [University of Central Lancashire](#); and [University of Salford](#). ProtectED Patron, Baroness Ruth Henig, has hosted three high-profile [House of Lords](#) events to welcome ProtectED Founder Member universities and to further promote the holistic accreditation scheme. UCL, the first Russell Group university to join ProtectED, confirmed why it was supporting the scheme: *'The safety, security and wellbeing of students is of paramount importance to us at UCL. We are proud to be a Founder Member of ProtectED, demonstrating our commitment to achieving our security objective to provide a safe and secure working environment for all students, staff and visitors'* [5.1].

4.1. Influencing policies and practices across the HE sector

The **holistic approach** adopted by ProtectED is recognised as a **key innovation** of its Code of Practice [3.4, 5.2]. The Code details three 'Achievement Levels' for each of 187 Indicators: Required Level; +2; and +3. Universities must meet the minimum 'Required Level' across all indicators to achieve the *ProtectED Accredited Institution* award. Benchmarking against the Code has enabled member institutions to identify areas for improvement and resulted in the **updating and improvement of policies and practices relating to student safety, security and wellbeing** [5.3]. This has included university-level policies in relation to emergency planning and business continuity [5.3, 5.4].

Work to implement the Code has **reinforced and supported partnership working** with external stakeholders [5.3] and has also **improved cross-departmental working** within institutions [5.5]. Founder Member Brunel University stated that the requirements of the Code *'led to some key relationship building between the appropriate people and departments across the University'* [5.5]. Teesside University also supported this approach: *'We can use ProtectED as a tool to show that the University is a safe place to study. It really appeals that we can develop a holistic approach under one framework'* [5.5].

The [British Council](#) now uses the *ProtectED* Code to **inform training in the HE sector**, in this case structuring it around the **international 'student journey'**. Using the ProtectED Code of Practice as a guide, the British Council highlights important issues which affect international students: from selecting an UK institution, through to student experiences whilst studying at their chosen institution including pre-arrival to the UK, arrival, international student orientation, awareness of fraudulent scams and visa compliance issues affecting study [5.6]. They advise universities to comply with the Code of Practice and **thereby reduce international students'**

risk of becoming victim to crime and exploitation while studying in the UK [5.6]. As a Founder Member, Brunel University advocates use of the Code to support international students as part of an end-to-end process: *'Our international marketing department loved the idea of ProtectED for how it appeals to international student concerns'* [5.5].

4.2. Changing perceptions and practices around security provision

Engagement with ProtectED has enabled sharing of best practice between universities [5.3, 5.5], as well as directly impacting **institutions' thinking and practice, particularly during COVID-19** [5.3, 5.4, 5.7]. The holistic approach taken by ProtectED has **positively changed perceptions** around the role of university security. Based on ProtectED, institutions have **modernised their approach to university security services**, implementing mental health training for security staff, thereby enabling them to **better help students and staff in distress** [5.3]. Prior to ProtectED, security staff were not routinely trained in how to deal with such issues. As a result of the Code, the Association of University Chief Security Officers (AUCSO) has introduced **free Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training** for its members throughout the UK, Ireland and Australia [5.4]. AUCSO's Executive Chair confirmed that *'this training has been key to improving the way higher education security officers have supported students during the Covid-19 crisis'* [5.4]. The good practice shared around this issue of student wellbeing and mental health is also promoted by Brunel University: *'We found that many of our students have a great deal going on in their lives, beyond the demands of studying for a university degree, and that extra support was needed in certain areas'* [5.5].

ProtectED emphasises the need for ongoing performance improvement [**text removed for publication**]. Indeed, AUCSO maintains that ProtectED has **changed the perceptions of security staff** about their own role, with the role of a security officer in HE now more widely recognised as being about engaging with students and meeting their expectations [5.4]. The ProtectED approach has also increased consideration of **diversity in security provision**, with women now better represented within AUCSO [5.4]. ProtectED has therefore contributed to the **professionalisation of the role of security** within HE, with the scheme being recognised by professional bodies as a **reference point for good practice** [5.4, 5.7]. The Interim Chief Executive of the Security Industry Authority (SIA), the UK Government regulator of the private security industry, attests to the value of ProtectED's contribution to *'improving standards in the higher education sector where security practice is fragmented'* [5.7].

4.3. Raising standards across the wider security sector

The scheme's **contribution to standards improvement has been acknowledged internationally**, with ProtectED winning the IFSEC International Security & Fire Excellence Award in 2019 for *'Contribution to standards in the security sector'* [5.8] and a 2020 OSPA (Outstanding Security Performance Award) for *'Outstanding customer service initiative'* [5.8]. Its holistic approach to student support was recognised, with ProtectED being a Finalist for the 2020 PIEoneer Student Support Awards [5.8].

By evidencing the commitment of private and public sector security professionals to improving standards, ProtectED emboldened the SIA in its **recommendations on ways to improve standards in the security industry**. This has supported the SIA in its efforts to promote **better regulation and accreditation** [5.2, 5.7]. For example, experience in developing and prototyping the ProtectED Code resulted in the SIA introducing **improvements to its Approved Contractor Scheme (ACS)**, thereby reducing the time applicants spend completing forms and resulting in **improved customer satisfaction** [5.7]. ProtectED has also informed SIA strategy, with two of the SIA focus areas aligning with the Code of Practice: **the night time economy** and **safeguarding the vulnerable** [5.7]. Drawing on SIA industry expertise, the ProtectED Code of Practice further drives **cost efficiencies for institutional members** [5.7].

ProtectED has additionally helped **commercial security companies better understand** and meet the needs of the HE context [5.2, 5.9]. [**Text removed for publication**]. Similarly, insight

gained from the development of ProtectED is also enabling a security standards compliance consultancy to help **clients understand and orientate their services to the specific needs of the HE sector**, supporting it in winning business [5.2].

The impact of ProtectED on commercial companies and HE institutions alike has been to **improve business processes and practices** and improve the **quality of service experienced** by their customers, university students and staff [5.3, 5.7, 5.9].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

5.1. Article: *'University College London joins student security and safety initiative'*, IFSEC Global (5 February 2020). Available at:

<https://www.ifsecglobal.com/security/university-college-london-joins-student-security-and-safety-initiative/> on UCL joining ProtectED as a Founder Member (4.1)

5.2. Testimonial: K7 Compliance Ltd. (February 2021), on the holistic approach of the Code (4.1), promoting better regulation and accreditation and meeting the needs of the HE sector (4.3)

5.3. Testimonial: University College London (UCL) (February 2021), Founder Member perspective on improvement of policies (4.1) and sharing of best practice (4.2, 4.3)

5.4. Testimonial: Executive Chair, Association of University Chief Security Officers (AUCSO), (February 2021), on policies in relation to business continuity (4.1), changes during COVID-19 pandemic, introduction of mental health training and professionalisation of the role of security staff (4.2)

5.5. Blog: ProtectED Conversations event in London (19 July 2019). Available at:

<https://www.protect-ed.org/single-post/2019/08/13/protected-conversations-blog-london-190719>, featuring comments from ProtectED Founder Member institutions, Brunel University and Teesside University on the Code's influence (4.1) and issues around student wellbeing (4.2)

5.6. Flyer: British Council International Education Services (October 2018). Available at:

<https://ieswebsiteusers.cmail20.com/t/ViewEmail/t/F904E5B5023B72EF2540EF23F30FEDED/979700521AAE271E2A1BF84ACBDD178B>, on use of ProtectED Instrument to deliver training on international students (4.1)

5.7. Testimonial: Security Industry Authority (February 2021), on changes during the COVID-19 pandemic, improving standards in the HE sector (4.2), promoting better regulation and accreditation, making cost efficiencies and improving the quality of service (4.3)

5.8. Articles: *'Providing security and safety to university students – ProtectED'*, IFSEC Global (10 December 2019). Available at:

<https://www.ifsecglobal.com/security/providing-security-and-safety-to-university-students-protected/>, on ProtectED winning 2019 IFSEC International Security & Fire Excellence award (4.3); ProtectED awarded *'Outstanding Customer Service Initiative'* at 2020 OSPAs (Outstanding Security Performance Awards). Available at:

<https://uk.theospas.com/winners-of-the-2020-uk-ospas/> (4.3); ProtectED finalist for *'Student Support Award'* in 2020 PIEoneer Awards. Available at:

<https://pieoneerawards.com/2020/en/page/pieoneer-awards-2020-finalists> (4.3)

5.9. Testimonial: OCS Group UK Ltd. (February 2021), on commercial companies meeting the needs of the HE sector and improving the quality of service (4.3)