



DRAGON-SHIELD

DRAGON-Shield Evaluation

Developing Resistance Against Grooming Online (DRAGON-S)

Are you a practitioner working to safeguard children from Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (OCSAE), particularly Online Grooming (OG)? Would you benefit from understanding how groomers and children communicate online to enhance prevention, protection and support you provide? Would you like free exclusive access to a 4-week pilot of ground-breaking, research-based training to understand how communication works in OG?

[Sign up and join us](#) to realise our vision to deliver this training to child safeguarding practitioners globally.

What is Project DRAGON-S?

DRAGON-S, funded by [Safe Online at End Violence Against Children](#), is an applied research project driven by an awareness that OG is devastating for child victims and their families, and that it is a crime increasing exponentially.

We address two major challenges faced by prevention and prosecution agencies:

1. Extant countermeasures are limited by lack of understanding of how groomers communicate online.
2. Agencies are being overwhelmed by the volume and communicative sophistication of groomers.

DRAGON-S uniquely combines **international expertise in Linguistics and Artificial Intelligence** to tackle these challenges through human-centred, innovative technology, specifically two interrelated, research-based digital tools: an OG detector (DRAGON-Spotter) and an OG prevention tool (DRAGON-Shield).

Tell me more about DRAGON-Shield?

DRAGON-Shield is the **only training suite in existence that focuses on how OG works communicatively**, from an integrated groomer and victim perspective. Comprising 8 modules, each taking approximately 30 minutes to complete, DRAGON-Shield requires a time commitment of c. 4 hours that can be completed in your own time. On successful completion, practitioners unlock a **resource pack to take forward into their practice**.

DRAGON-Shield:

- Has been **co-designed and tested with ~250 intended end-users** (child-safeguarding practitioners; children and young people, lived experience experts);
- Consists of a **web-based application, with offline access**, that provides research-based, customised training for practitioners involved in safeguarding children from OG, i.e., social workers, educators, youth mental health workers, police officers and representatives from the third sector;
- Uses **accessible examples** delivered through a mixed-media approach of **original animations, audio visual excerpts of OG interactions** as well as **interactive activities** and a **ground-breaking OG chat simulator** to help consolidate knowledge.

Tell me more about the DRAGON-Shield Evaluation?

We now have a strong and robustly tested product. Prior to full-scale roll out we want to **pilot and evaluate** DRAGON-Shield’s real-world use to explore how it translates to practice and to gather intelligence about how to scale up and apply the tool in international contexts.

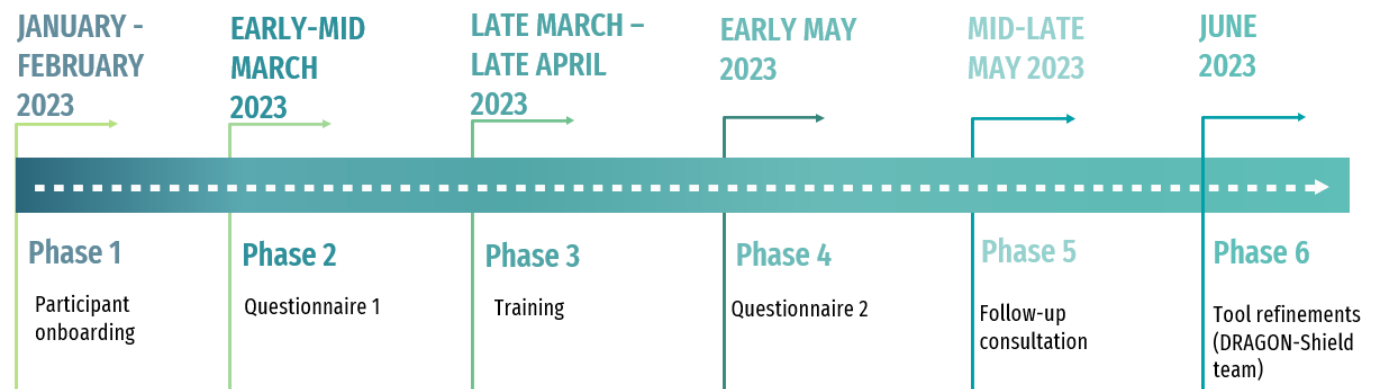
What is the timeframe for the evaluation?

DRAGON-Shield will be evaluated over 6-months in 2023- see **Figure 1**.

The evaluation methodology is informed by best practice in applied research. It combines

- rigour, through ethically sound, diverse evaluation methods (pre- and post- training completion questionnaires (Q) and follow-up consultation via voluntary participation in one focus group or 1-2-1 interview); and
- practitioner-led flexibility – see section ‘What will I need to do?’

Figure 1: DRAGON-Shield Evaluation Phases and Timeframe



Who will be involved?

For each evaluation site we are seeking a balanced, cross-section of up to 30 practitioners who have a role in safeguarding children from OCSEA (see Figure 2 – page 3). We are also keen to reflect the make-up of local child safeguarding environments, so if your sector is not on the list and feel you would benefit then please do register your interest.

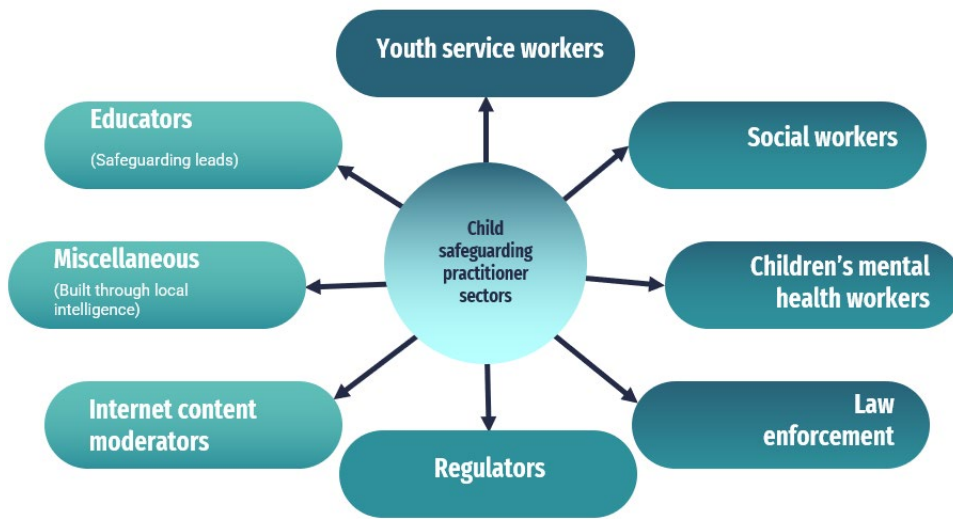
Applications will be considered from mid-November until mid-December 2022. We are also seeking volunteers to work through the DRAGON-Shield Resource pack with children and young people and gather their feedback via a Virtual Feedback space. Please indicate if you could help with this aspect of the pilot in [the sign-up form](#).

If accepted onto the evaluation, what will I need to do?

Participants will be asked to:

1. Sign a simple ‘Terms of Use’ document;
2. Attend a virtual evaluation project welcome meeting (30 minutes);
3. Complete two brief online questionnaires: (i) pre-training (Q1) and (ii) post-training (Q2) (30 minutes overall);
4. Complete the DRAGON-Shield training over a 4-week period; you will be invited to keep a reflective journal/survey throughout 3; and
5. Register your interest in participating in either a focus group session or a 1-2-1 interview (45-60 minutes) to help provide us with additional feedback.

Figure 2: DRAGON-Shield Evaluation (Practitioner Sectors)



What's in it for me?

You will get:

- Free, exclusive, first access to ground-breaking research-based training about how communication works in OG and a free copy (per organisation) of the book that describes the research underpinning the training;
- Access to advice and support from team DRAGON-Shield, as required;
- To be part of shaping plans for scaling up the DRAGON-Shield to help upskill child-safeguarding practitioners across the world to enhance the protection and support that child victims of OG receive.
- A certificate of engagement that can be put towards professional portfolios/evidence of Continuing Professional Development.

What will happen next?

Register your interest to take part by 24th February 2023 [here](#). Successful candidates will be contacted no later than 28th February 2023 with further details regarding the evaluation phases.

Project Supporters and Partners

